

CERTIFICATES OF FITNESS ISSUED TO BOYS AND GIRLS TO WORK IN FACTORIES.

The number of certificates issued to boys and girls of under sixteen years of age to work in factories continues to decrease from year to year, especially in regard to boys. This information is interesting in that it shows that, notwithstanding the demand, the supply of boys and girls for factories is still on the decrease. Certificates were issued during the year to 937 boys and 1,251 girls. A return giving details in towns, and showing standards of education passed, is given in this report, page 80.

ACCIDENTS IN FACTORIES.

—				Slight.	Moderate.	Serious.	Fatal.	Total.
1910-11	..	..	..	638	145	77	12	872
1911-12	..	..	..	792	167	50	11	1,020
1912-13	..	..	..	837	84	32	8	961
1913-14	..	..	..	879	165	52	8	1,104

Although the number of all accidents reported during the year per thousand workers (12.61) is higher this year than previously reported, the proportions of serious and fatal accidents are not so large. Probably the higher total is due to the stricter adherence by factory-occupiers to the requirements of the Act (that all accidents shall be reported), and to the closer supervision exercised by Inspectors; many of the minor accidents might otherwise have escaped notice.

The figures show that about 95 per cent. of recorded accidents were not so serious as to affect a worker's earning-power.

Of the eight fatal accidents the circumstances were as follow: An engineer, whilst preparing road-metal with the aid of heated tar, was killed by the explosion of the accumulated gas in one of the tanks; while erecting machinery a foreman boilermaker was instantly killed by the falling of a fly-wheel; a freezing-works labourer contracted a severe rupture whilst lifting a heavy bag of fat, and died as a result of same; a dairy factory employee became entangled in a revolving shaft and was killed instantly; an engineer at cement-works, while fixing an iron support to a chute, slipped and fell on his head; an engine-driver in a flax-mill was caught in a running belt; a carpenter helping with pile-driving was killed by the falling of the "monkey," the chain of which broke; a sawmill hand engaged in working a steam hauler was killed by a piece of flying timber which he had been using as a lever.

In the case of each accident careful inquiries are made by the Department's Inspectors in order to ascertain whether due care has been exercised by the persons responsible, and where it is found that precautionary measures against future accidents are practicable steps are taken accordingly.

As already mentioned under "Prosecutions," seven prosecutions were instituted for failure to report accidents within forty-eight hours.

The table hereunder shows the accidents in each industrial district:—

Northern Industrial District	..	..	..	..	..	378
Taranaki Industrial District	..	..	..	..	..	15
Wellington Industrial District	..	..	..	..	..	243
Nelson Industrial District	..	..	..	..	..	6
Westland Industrial District	..	..	..	..	..	16
Canterbury Industrial District	..	..	..	..	..	258
Otago and Southland Industrial District	..	..	..	..	..	188

A chart illustrating the accidents in factories during the years 1903 to 1914 inclusive is included at the end of the report.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS.

From amongst a number of suggestions for amendment of the Act the following are commended for early consideration:—

- (1.) For the heating of workrooms on the lines of the clause inserted in the Shops and Offices Act last session.
- (2.) Making it an offence for any person to take belting off machinery while the latter is in motion.
- (3.) That in the absence of any contract to the contrary, the Act shall be deemed to provide for a minimum notice of termination of employment of one week. Such a clause would obviate many difficulties that arise where no agreement of any kind has been entered into at the time of engagement.