

boys on becoming men remain at their work, the proportion of women in manufactories is only maintained by the continuous reinforcements of young girls entering industrial life to leave it again after adult or marriageable age is reached.

If we collate the figures of the chief cities for five years (see note below) bearing on this subject, we find that the total number of workers engaged in factories during 1903-4 was 36,648, and of these 12,683 were under twenty-one years of age, forming 34·6 per cent. of the whole. In 1908-9 there are 12,851 under twenty-one years of age, which, in proportion to the whole number engaged, is 28·8 per cent. Thus there is a reduction of about 6 per cent. in the numbers of those under twenty-one years, during the five years under consideration.

NOTE.—In the four chief cities there were engaged in factories (employers being counted as adults),—

				1903-4.	1908-9.
Males	..	..	..	25,294—69 per cent.	31,512—70·6 per cent.
Females	..	..	..	11,354—31 „	13,151—29·4 „
Totals				36,648	44,663

The following table shows the sexes broken into ages, for the same years :—

Age.	Males.				Females.			
	1903-4.	Percentage of Sex.	1908-9.	Percentage of Sex.	1903-4.	Percentage of Sex.	1908-9.	Percentage of Sex.
14-16	2,506	9·90	2,239	7·1	2,006	17·67	2,208	16·8
17-20	4,228	16·71	4,297	13·7	3,943	34·73	4,107	31·2
21 and over ..	18,560	73·39	24,976	79·2	5,405	47·60	6,836	51·9
Totals	25,294	..	31,512	..	11,354	..	13,151	..

The above table shows that, whereas in 1903-4, of the total males, 26·6 per cent. were under twenty-one years of age, in 1908-9 the proportion had decreased to 20·8 per cent., a drop of about 6 per cent. The females under twenty-one years who in 1903-4 constituted 52·4 of the total females are now but 48 per cent. of the total workers of that sex, a drop of nearly 4½ per cent.

Average Wage.

The average wage paid to factory employees last year was £84 18s.

Overtime.

The overtime worked by men and youths is not being shown this year. It was urged by some unions, and with justice, that the publication of the hours of overtime sometimes created false impressions abroad. If, for example, it is officially stated that tens of thousands of hours of overtime are being worked annually in New Zealand—as they are worked—the idea presented to people in other countries may be that there is a great dearth of workers in certain industries. It very often happens, however, that in a trade where at one season much overtime is worked, at another season perhaps only three or four days a week are filled in, or only 75 per cent. of the workers are on full time. To keep record of the continual changes and shifts in the daily and hourly time-off of 78,000 workers in 12,000 factories would entail great expense and trouble ; overtime is more easily computed, as it has to be paid for, and overtime-books are—or should be—kept in every industrial establishment. Rather than mislead by showing the plus of overtime without the minus of time-off, it has been thought better to leave out the overtime of the men altogether. The total number of hours of overtime worked by women and girls was 263,133, and the detail of this overtime is shown in the appendix to this report.

Accidents in Factories.

During the last year 803 accidents have occurred in our factories. Of these, 4 were fatal, 13 serious, 216 moderate, and 570 slight. These figures show that during the year there was one fatal accident to every 19,712 workers, and one accident of some kind to each 98 of these. Considering that a large proportion of factory-workers is employed among complicated machinery, and that many of them are engaged in occupations involving hourly risk, the fact that casualties of every kind are being kept down to 1 per cent. is creditable to the inspection and superintendence of industrial machinery, and also to the steadiness and watchfulness of workers themselves. A chart is included in the appendix of this report illustrating the proportion of accidents in factories for the years 1903 to 1909 inclusive. It will be noted that the number of fatal accidents has generally decreased.