

District.	Employees.						Employers.		Total Number engaged in Shops, including Employers.	Shops.			Total Wages paid during the Year.
	Males.			Females.			Males.	Females.		Employing Assistants.	Without Assistants.	Total.	
	Age 14-16.	Age 17-20.	Age 21 and over.	Age 14-16.	Age 17-20.	Age 21 and over.							
Auckland City	240	345	1,406	119	312	598	1,024	196	4,240	572	661	1,233	£ 253,508
Wellington City	200	238	1,150	76	168	449	1,131	125	3,537	592	570	1,162	225,640
Christchurch City	283	283	1,184	65	235	432	1,212	204	3,898	819	531	1,350	228,764
Dunedin City	208	313	952	57	203	389	1,063	213	3,398	738	509	1,247	192,780
Northern Industrial District ..	251	305	969	109	215	288	1,689	151	3,977	838	923	1,761	163,207
Taranaki Industrial District ..	96	127	336	47	88	114	657	50	1,515	292	344	636	60,456
Wellington Industrial District ..	339	401	1,699	110	314	487	2,153	158	5,661	996	1,136	2,132	291,967
Marlborough Industrial District ..	44	39	107	9	13	38	153	12	415	53	90	143	20,926
Nelson Industrial District ..	42	41	207	8	37	86	280	33	734	137	145	282	36,665
Westland Industrial District ..	92	116	300	27	53	78	474	83	1,223	265	273	538	56,747
Canterbury Industrial District ..	138	185	645	45	141	169	910	76	2,309	456	474	930	112,832
Otago and Southland Industrial District ..	209	288	847	51	165	281	1,244	127	3,212	581	694	1,275	148,707
Totals	2,142	2,681	9,802	723	1,944	3,409	11,990	1,428	34,119	6,339	6,350	12,689	1,792,199

In the four chief cities, Auckland leads with the largest wages-sheet : Auckland, £253,508 ; Christchurch, £228,764 ; Wellington, £225,640 ; Dunedin, £192,780. If, however, we include with each city its surrounding industrial district, the distribution of wages is as follows : Wellington, £517,607 ; Auckland, £416,715 ; Canterbury, £341,596 ; Otago and Southland, £341,487. The coincidence between Canterbury and Otago in this matter is singularly close.

The average wage of a shop-assistant, male or female, in New Zealand is £86 11s. 6d.—an advance on the average rate of last year, which was £82 10s. The rate of wage differs considerably in the chief cities, being in Wellington £98 18s. 5d., in Christchurch £92 3s. 4d., in Dunedin £88 11s. 11d., in Auckland £83 18s. 10d. In the country districts a lower rate of wages is paid in the Northern and Taranaki Districts than in Wellington or in the South Island.

As to persons employed in shops, the ratio of those under twenty-one years of age to every 100 of those over twenty-one (employers personally engaged included) is as follows :—

	Auckland City.	Wellington City.	Christchurch City.	Dunedin City.
Males	24-07	19-20	23-62	25-85
Females	54-28	42-50	47-16	43-18

There are fewer youths at work in Wellington than in the other cities, and fewer girls also. The ratio of those engaged under twenty-one years to every 100 of those over twenty-one, including employers actually engaged, for the whole of New Zealand is—for males, 22-13 ; females, 55-14. If the corresponding figures for factories be considered it will be noticed that there are more youths under age in the shops in proportion to men, and more women in the shops in proportion to girls, than is the ratio of employment at the same ages in factories.

There is an advance in numbers of shop-assistants employed this year over those of last year as follows :—

	1908.	1909.	Increase.
Males	14,477	14,625	148
Females	5,825	6,076	251
Totals	20,302	20,701	399

There are 12,689 shops in New Zealand. The employers personally engaged and assistants in these together number 34,119, of whom 20,701 are shop-assistants.

THE INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

There is little doubt that in late years the Arbitration Act excited disfavour, even if we discount much that was said by disappointed men, and by some who by no means represented the solid silent opinion of the great body of labour in the Dominion. In spite of many and great advantages wrought by industrial arbitration, the delay in hearing cases—caused by what was practically the abolition of the Conciliation Boards—the advent of small strikes, and the publication of some disappointing awards, caused dissatisfaction on the parts of both employers and workers. It was thought necessary to fix by legislation the limits and meanings of such expressions as “strike” and “lockout,” and also to differentiate between degrees of culpability in respect to such occurrences. The power to punish, and the extent of punishment for offences against the Act were also subjects of bitter controversy, some affirming the weakness of any law which did not insist upon such extremes as levy by distress warrant or personal