

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

Northern Industrial District	418
Taranaki Industrial District	10
Wellington Industrial District	255
Marlborough Industrial District	1
Nelson Industrial District	8
Westland Industrial District	12
Canterbury Industrial District	182
Otago and Southland Industrial District	134

A chart is included at the end of the report illustrating the accidents in factories during the years 1903 to 1912, inclusive.

Possibly the increase in the number of accidents reported over those of last year is due to the fact that the employers are more conversant with the requirements of the Act and report all accidents, even to the slightest mishaps, some of which in past years might have been overlooked; and this suggestion is borne out by the fact that the increase in the total number of accidents is under the headings "slight" and "moderate," whilst those headed "serious" and "fatal" show a decided decrease. The Inspectors of Factories make careful inquiries into the cause of each accident, and any machinery requiring extra safeguards to protect the life and limbs of workers is at once attended to.

Prosecutions.

The following figures show a slight increase on those in the previous year's report. 108 cases were brought before the Court, as against 102 during the previous year; in 1910 the total cases were 113, and in 1909, 150. This year convictions were obtained in 101 cases, and 7 cases were dismissed.

The different offences under the Act are summarized as follows:—

Nature of Offences.	Number of Cases taken.
Failing to allow weekly half-holiday to females and boys	13
Failing to grant statutory whole holiday to females and boys	17
Failing to pay wages fortnightly	24
Failing to keep wages and overtime books, &c.	10
Employing persons under sixteen in factories without permits	16
Employing females and boys overtime without permits	2
Failing to report accidents within forty-eight hours	5
Failing to post up in factories prescribed form specifying hours of work, holidays, &c.	1
Failing to register factories	4
Miscellaneous offences	16

Of the dismissed cases, three for employing women on the statutory half-holiday were dismissed as trivial on the ground that a holiday—viz., Easter Monday—had already been observed during the week; one for employing a dressmaker more than forty-five hours per week without first obtaining written permission from the Inspector was also dismissed as trivial, as it was shown that the woman had been working in order to obtain a holiday during the next week. These cases were dismissed as trivial by virtue of section 92 of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908; and, although it was held on appeal that breaches of the Act had been committed, the Magistrate's discretionary powers under that section could not be interfered with. One case against a restaurateur for failing to keep his factory in a sanitary condition was dismissed, as the Magistrate held that there was no evidence to show that more than one person had been employed in the shed where oysters were prepared for consumption, and where the alleged insanitary conditions prevailed. A case against a timber company for failing to report an accident within forty-eight hours was dismissed as the evidence showed that defendants had reported the occurrence as soon as possible after the injuries had assumed a serious aspect; it was at first thought the worker would not be incapacitated for more than forty-eight hours, in which case notice to the Inspector would have been unnecessary. Another similar case against a sawmiller was dismissed as the result of the accident had not assumed a serious aspect until several days after its occurrence.

Amongst the suggestions made for the improvement of the Factories Act is one which specifies that first-aid appliances should be provided in all factories where machinery is used. As no doubt in most large factories where machinery is used there are two or three workers who have some practical training of first aid, it is suggested that the appliances above mentioned should be insisted upon in all such factories.