

1886.
NEW ZEALAND.

"THE EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALES AND OTHERS ACT, 1881"
(FURTHER REPORTS OF INSPECTORS UNDER).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

REPORT of Inspector JAMES BENNETTS.

THE above Act appears to be giving every satisfaction to the employers and employés throughout this district.

An attempt was made, shortly after the amendment Act, 1885, came into force, to have the Saturday half-holiday altered to Thursday, but the petition was got up principally by those to whom the Act does not apply, namely, shop-hands, not the factory-workers. A counter-petition was got up by those most interested, and, on the strength of it, the City Council declined to alter the day.

It is only in one class of business where giving the Saturday half-holiday seems to press heavily on employers, and those are saddlers. More business is done by them on Saturday than the rest of the week. The farmers are their principal customers, and that is their usual visiting-day to town. There are nine saddlers in this district, employing from twelve to eighteen hands altogether.

Both clauses of section 7 are strictly observed. There are about twenty children employed, and they are chiefly found in brush and barbed-wire factories.

Section 9 is now faithfully carried out in all factories. Great negligence and indifference were shown at the earlier part of the year to this section. The notices showing the hours of labour are posted in the different work-rooms, and copies sent to the Resident Magistrate and to this office. 124 copies are now filed.

During the past twelve months thirty-one persons have been brought before the Court. One offence was under section 7, subsection 2; seventeen cases were under section 9; while the remaining thirteen were under section 6, for keeping females and young persons after 2 o'clock on Saturday afternoons.

The principal offenders are dressmakers and bootmakers doing a small business. The majority of employers seem to be only anxious to faithfully carry out the Act, and always afford the Inspector every information and attention in carrying out his duties.

All the factories are fairly-well ventilated. In a few cases there is a tendency to overcrowding, but promises have been made to the Inspector in those cases that the work-rooms will be enlarged.

The Inspector was unable to give particulars in his report for the quarter ending the 30th June, as he was at that time busily engaged inspecting the different factories.

Christchurch, 16th July, 1886.

JAMES BENNETTS.

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