

At any rate, to give anything like satisfaction, it will be well to make as few exemptions as possible: that, I think, is the feeling amongst the business people.

I may say that I received every assistance from the employers of labour in carrying out both the Factories and Shop-assistants Acts, who seem anxious to comply with the Act as near as they can.

I have, &c.,

H. HALLETT, Inspector of Factories.

E. Tregear, Esq., Secretary, Department of Labour, Wellington.

[It is with regret that I have to notice that, on the 31st May, Mr. Hallett, the Inspector of Factories, died. The Government thus loses the services of a valuable and painstaking officer.—
SECRETARY.]

OAMARU.

SIR,—

Department of Labour Office, Oamaru, 31st March, 1895.

I have the honour to submit for your information a report upon the working of the Factory and Shops and Shop-assistants Acts for the year ending 31st March, 1895.

With respect to the first-mentioned Act, I have found it to work well in this district. I have had no prosecutions during the year, and I found both employes and employers work smoothly together. Up to the present I have registered forty-six factories and workrooms, and, with one or two exceptions, I have had no reason to interfere with the way in which the Act was carried out. I have, at uncertain times, visited the factories and workrooms, and found them clean, well ventilated, and the hours allowed by me to work overtime being strictly adhered to. I have reluctantly granted overtime in a few instances on the half-holiday. My reason for saying reluctantly is this: Knowing well that employes will not refuse to work when asked to do so, still I think it a little severe to have them employed when all others are enjoying their half-holiday.

I have pointed out to employers that I would in no instance exceed the number of hours allowed for overtime, of which I duly keep a record. I have found my wishes with regard to whitewashing and all sanitary arrangements willingly carried out, and I was glad to learn from Mrs. Neill that she was pleased with the provisions made in this respect.

To bakehouses I have devoted a good deal of attention, and I think the Act perfect with regard to them.

I have only had one or two complaints, which referred to the emptying of closet-pans, which were at once attended to on bringing this matter under the notice of employers.

With respect to the Shops and Shop-assistants Act, I may say at once that I have taken it very quietly. I have, however, attended to the ventilation and sanitary provisions and the seating of young girls in shops, which have been duly attended to. With regard to tobacconists, I find in some cases what appears to be a hardship. For instance, those who employ assistants, and who do not reside on the premises, have to close, whereas their neighbour, who lives on the premises and does not employ assistants, can keep open on the half-holiday.

With respect to offices, &c., the half-holiday here is Thursday, and at present the office employes close on that day and keep open on the Saturday. This arrangement is working well, and giving entire satisfaction.

I have, &c.,

E. Tregear, Esq., Wellington.

THOMAS O'GRADY, Inspector of Factories.

DUNEDIN.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Dunedin, 31st March, 1895.

I have the honour to submit a report on the Factory and Shops and Shop-assistants Acts, 1894.

During the present year 442 factories and workrooms have been registered, employing 3,178 males and 1,948 females—5,126 persons.

In so far as the Factory Act is concerned it seems to work fairly well and is generally observed, though during my short term of office I have had occasion to prosecute in some instances for breaches of the law.

In the case of inspection of factories cases of defective sanitation have come under my notice, which, in a number of instances, on being pointed out have been remedied. Still, I must confess there is room for further improvement in this direction, and would respectfully suggest the advisability of the appointment of a health officer, who could from time to time visit the different factories, workrooms, and shops, and advise as to their sanitary condition.

Relative to section 23, dealing with the ticketing of articles manufactured in private dwellings and unregistered workrooms, am pleased to state at present very little of that class of work is carried on here, but where it exists the law is being observed; up to the present five shopkeepers have registered under this section.

In regard to section 54, where formerly forty-five hours constituted a week's work for women and young persons, the amendment of 1894 increased this to forty-eight hours, which is largely taken advantage of by the employers, but is by no means regarded with favour by the employes affected.

"The Shops and Shop-assistants Act, 1894," I am sorry to say, has not worked so satisfactorily as expected or wished for, which is entirely caused by the clauses exempting certain classes from its operation. During my term I have had a large number of prosecutions under this Act.

If the Act is to be of real service it will be necessary to reduce, if not abolish, all exemptions, more particularly the shops that claim to be exempt by non-employment of labour. Take, for example, the case of a widow, for whom the exemption would specially apply, with a family not old enough to be of assistance in the conduct of the business, she must necessarily employ labour, conse-