

Work on the stations has been very good during the year. Most of the stations have increased their stock, which has given work to a number of hands. This year's shearing has been a great success, some of the stations getting nearly double the clips.

During the early part of the year a little excitement was caused in the Wairau Valley by some men finding a few specks of gold. A rush started, but I am sorry to say it soon fell through.

I am glad to say that Marlborough is pushing ahead so far as regards the frozen-mutton trade. The Marlborough Freezing Company have started a factory at Spring Creek, and from what I can hear the company expect to make a great success. They intend shipping the mutton direct from Picton to England, which no doubt will save time and money.

I was glad of Miss Scott's visit during the early part of the year, which lightened me of my duties. A few alterations were pointed out by Miss Scott, which have been carried out to my approval.

During my time here I have had no trouble as regards the Act, the employers and employed giving no trouble. On none of my visits did I hear any complaints.

The Act, I am glad to say, is well carried out. There have been no convictions during the year under this Act.

E. Tregear, Esq., Wellington.

THOMAS H. PRICE, Inspector, Blenheim.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Nelson, 26th April, 1897.

I have to report for your information that the number of factories registered in this district is ninety-two, and that so far the Acts have been carefully complied with, and that up to the present there has not been any attempt at breaches of the Act or complaints either by employer or employé.

HENRY MCARDLE, Inspector of Factories and Labour Agent.

E. Tregear, Esq.

BRUNNERTON.

SIR,—

Brunnerton, 26th April, 1897.

I have the honour to submit herewith for your information my annual report for the year 1896-97, and in doing so I have only to state that I have no difficulty whatever in getting the Factories and other Acts complied with.

During the year there has only been one accident—viz., that of a man getting his collarbone fractured at a sawmill at Kotuku by a piece of timber striking him, and, considering the large number of hands employed here at this class of work, I consider that one accident for the year is nothing out of the way.

The chief work carried on here is coal-mining, and the Greymouth-Point Elizabeth Coal-mining Company employ about two hundred men and boys in their Brunner Coal-mine, all of whom appear to be well satisfied at the rate of pay they receive.

During the year I have had several applications from persons to obtain employment on the co-operative works, Jackson's—Otiara Section, Midland Railway extension, but from what I could make out of most of the applicants they appeared to be persons who did not seem to care whether they obtained work or not—swaggers, &c. There are no real unemployed here.

In conclusion, I may add that the Wednesday half-holiday is strictly observed here by the shopkeepers, and I have had no complaint from the employés.

I have, &c.,

HENRY BEATTIE, Inspector of Factories.

E. Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

GREYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Police-station, Greymouth, 26th April, 1897.

I have the honour respectfully to report that there are fifty factories registered in this district, as follows: Thirteen sawmills, employing 90 males; one foundry, 30 males; five bakeries, 14 males; two breweries, 5 males; one confectioner, 3 males; one gasworks, 4 males; two coach-factories, 7 males; four furniture-makers, 16 males; seven dressmakers, 29 females; two cordial-makers, 6 males; three blacksmiths, 7 males; five tailoring establishments, 14 males, 21 females; two printing and publishing works, 22 males, 3 females; one sash-and-door factory, 6 males; and one railway workshop, 7 males. The average wages are—for adults, £1 10s. per week; for young persons, 10s. to 15s. per week. In the dressmaking the employés are principally apprentices, and receive no wages. No complaints have been made by persons employed in the factories or otherwise, and they appear to be satisfied with the working of the Act.

I have noticed some men unemployed about the streets, but I think they make a fair living generally loading and unloading steamers and sailing-vessels. On account of the difficulty of access to Greymouth by the unemployed in poor circumstances, labour is kept among the local residents, who are fairly comfortable. Race-meetings and good shows are well attended, and the people generously assist all cases of deserving distress caused by accidents, &c. They are, indeed, very kind in that direction.

The timber trade still continues, and there are great expectations of an extensive business being done, from the fact of thirteen sawmills at work in the district, and the Harbour Board having erected large sheds for the drying of timber for shipment, at apparently a great outlay of capital. This branch of industry gives employment to many.