

## LEESTON.

SIR,—

Police-station, Leeston, 1st April, 1899.

I have the honour to report that the Factory Act of 1894 is working satisfactorily in my district, and I have had no complaints from either employer or employé.

The Shops and Shop-assistants Act is also working splendidly, and I have had no complaints from either the shopkeepers or their assistants.

We have no statutory half-holiday fixed, as the district I am associated with is a Road Board district, and cannot fix a statutory holiday, but nevertheless every employé does get a half-holiday one day in the week.

As regards the labour-market, all classes of labour have been eagerly sought after, and the demand was, during the harvest months, much in excess of the supply. Males from fifteen years of age could find ample employment and receive good wages in their respective capacities. This year's harvest was such that there was an enormous amount of grain to handle, and it was, without doubt, the best season for the labouring-classes that has ever been known. Added to this fact, the price of flour, &c., has fallen in sympathy with the wheat-market. The prospects for the coming winter are most reassuring.

Sixteen threshing-machines, employing about two hundred men, have been in full swing since the first week in February, 1899, and they will not have the threshing finished before the end of next month, and each machine will put up a record for a season's threshing.

The demand for female domestics also is most eager, and there is absolutely no excuse for any one being out of employment.

I have never known so few swaggers on the roads since I came to this district, in the year 1892.

I have, &amp;c.,

P. McCORMACK, Inspector of Factories.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.

## ASHBURTON.

SIR,—

Police-station, Ashburton, 12th April, 1899.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1899.

This year I have registered seventy-eight factories, being an increase of ten over last year, employing 167 males and eighty females. There are three new factories to register, including the new freezing-works, which will employ about a hundred and fifty hands. The state of trade in this district has been fairly brisk for the past year, and the town is rapidly going ahead. A large number of new buildings have been erected, and there are still a number in course of erection, and builders in general have been very busy.

A number of overtime permits were granted during the year to the various trades, which show that work has been plentiful.

No accidents occurred, and no informations were laid under the Factories Act.

Respecting the Shops and Shop-assistants Act, I may say it has worked fairly well. Only two informations were laid, and convictions were recorded in both cases. The great difficulty with the half-holiday in Ashburton is the large horse-sales which are held on that day, and the shopkeepers are greatly tempted to break the law. If auctioneers were brought within this Act, and were prevented from holding sales on a holiday or half-holiday within the limits of a borough, it would greatly assist and prevent breaches of this Act.

With reference to the Servants' Registry Offices Act, there are two persons holding renewed licenses. I have had no complaints from any one, and their books are kept most satisfactorily, showing that a good business has been done.

I am pleased to state that there were fewer unemployed than in previous years. I received eighteen applications for employment, and six were sent to the Midland Railway works and four to other work in the district. The Fairfield Freezing-works, which are now completed, absorbed a large amount of surplus labour during the time of its erection, and will be a great boon to the labouring-classes of Ashburton.

I have, &amp;c.,

EDWARD EADE, Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

## TEMUKA.

SIR,—

Temuka, 19th April, 1899.

I have the honour, in compliance with your instructions, to submit herewith my annual report on the working of the factory, shops and shop-assistants, and labour laws in Temuka district, which includes the Townships of Temuka, Arowhenua, Winchester, and Orari.

## FACTORIES.

There are thirty-one factories working in Temuka district—viz., two printing, two flour-milling, five bread-baking, three blacksmithing, one blacksmithing and coachbuilding, one flax-milling,