

think if work could be found for them in the district it would be a kindly act. By that time, doubtless, many of the men will be in better positions than at present, and a move then will not press so hard on them.

In conclusion, I may say that the prospects of labour in this district are decidedly good.

E. Tregear, Esq.

Yours, &c.,

WM. H. BOASE.

HOKITIKA.

SIR,—

Police-station, Hokitika, 31st March, 1900.

In compliance with Circular No. 23, I beg to report for your information that, in except one instance, all factory-owners appear willing to conform to the Factory Act, but I am glad to say that I have had little trouble during the past year. There are comparatively few factories in this district, and though a few have fallen out, fresh ones have been registered, bringing the number up to last year's—thirty-five.

The Shops and Shop-assistants Act is working smoothly, and the employers appear to be satisfied, as during the year I have had no complaints from any of them. It is a fact that there was some grumbling, but upon inquiry there was no cause, as the complainants were ignorant of the provisions of the Act, which I explained to them as best I could.

There have been no public works of any magnitude in this district during the year.

For some time past there has been a great stir in dredging, which promises to be successful. Several companies have been floated, which will no doubt eventually somewhat relieve the depression which has so long existed.

Skilled labour does not much fluctuate. The old hands who have residences here pretty well suffice for the work that has to be done, and they all get work in turn. The building trade is generally pretty brisk, and carpenters receive good wages.

There are sometimes complaints from unskilled labourers, but mining and other works generally receives them.

There are no swaggers roaming about the country in search of work, as in some parts of the colony.

I must say that I have occasionally seen a few leaving co-operative works (for some cause or another) and those remaining making fair wages.

I have, &c.,

A. McDONALD, Agent, Labour Bureau.

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

ASHBURTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Ashburton, 31st March, 1900.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1900.

This year sixty-seven factories have been registered, employing 375 males and 113 females, being a decrease of twelve under last year.

The freezing-works at Fairfield are working full time, and employing 150 hands. This has created a brisk demand in the building trade.

Trade generally in the district has been exceptionally good, the harvest returns being again satisfactory.

I have again to point out the difficulty in working the Shops and Shop-assistants Act here on account of the horse-sales which are held on the half-holiday, when nearly all the grain-stores are open. Until auctioneers are brought within the Act, and prevented from holding auction sales on the half-holiday within the borough, it is almost impossible to prevent breaches of the Act.

Under the Servants' Registry Offices Act there have been two licenses renewed. In both cases the provisions of the Act have been carried out satisfactorily.

I have received no application during the year for employment, which is a record since the Labour Bureau opened here. This is principally due to the general prosperity of the district, it having found employment for the bulk of the surplus labour.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD EADE, Inspector of Factories.

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

TEMUKA.

SIR,—

Temuka, 31st March, 1900.

In compliance with regulations, I have the honour to submit the following report on the working of the labour laws in the Temuka district for the year ending the 31st March, 1900.

FACTORIES.

I have registered thirty-one factories and one registry office this year—viz., five bread and confectionery baking, one bacon-curing, one bacon and cheese, four blacksmithing, one blacksmithing and coachbuilding, five bootmaking, one brickmaking, one brewing and bottling, one cabinet-making, one cycle engineering, two dressmaking, one dressmaking and tailoring, one flaxmilling, two flourmilling, three fellmongering, one printing, and two tailoring.