

1901.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

(REPORT OF THE).

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

The SECRETARY, Department of Labour, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF LABOUR.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 24th June, 1901.

I have the honour to present herewith the tenth annual report of this department. It covers the late financial year—viz., from the 1st April, 1900, to the 31st March, 1901.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, Minister of Labour.

EDWARD TREGEAR, Secretary.

LABOUR.

THE year has been marked by unusual prosperity in business and continuous employment of labour in the colony. In many trades there has been a steady pressure upon the hands engaged, and in respect to agricultural demands a shortage of labour was felt during the harvesting period. The major cause of the pressure was the greatly increased volume of trade and the enhanced industrial activity. With the exception of the boot- and shoe-manufacture, which, unfortunately, has every year to be exempted from the roll of prosperous enterprises, the increase of business has been distributed over the whole community, although, of course, some occupations deserve more marked comment than others. Among these I may specify the woollen manufactories, where in some cases orders have had to be declined owing to overpressure. As among the more particularly flourishing businesses may be placed the building trades, foundries and engineering shops, clothing-factories, tanneries and fellmongeries, cabinetmaking workshops, dressmakers' establishments, &c. In some of these trades extra shifts have been worked and overtime carried to extreme limits without the effort to overtake the work in hand being carried to a successful result.

The "unemployed" difficulty has almost disappeared as a practical factor in the work of this department, thanks to the co-operative system used in the Departments of Public Works and Crown Lands. In the total number of 3,124 men passed through the books of this department, some 519 only should be considered as having been assisted as "unemployed" proper, these having been sent to private employment. The other 2,605 men were of those who, wishing to be employed upon Government works as artisans or labourers, had to register under the Labour Department, and be provided with the means of transit to the locality in which their services were required. Of the 3,124 men, 1,798 were single and 1,326 married—these latter having 5,432 persons dependent on them.

FACORIES.

There is an increase of 306 in the number of factories registered this year over those of the preceding year. The number of hands employed in these establishments has increased by 4,522, the total number being 53,460, of whom 40,381 are males and 13,079 females. These figures should be augmented by the record of 1,703 men and youths employed in the Government railway workshops. The following table shows the annual returns and increases during the last seven years:—

						Factory-workers.	Increase.
1895	...	...	...	...	...	29,879	...
1896	...	...	...	...	...	32,387	2,508
1897	...	...	...	...	...	36,918	4,531
1898	...	...	...	...	...	39,672	2,754
1899	...	...	...	...	...	45,305	5,633
1900	...	...	...	...	...	48,938	3,633
1901	...	...	...	...	...	53,460	4,522

Total increase 23,581

This shows an increase of 79 per cent. in seven years.

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