

With each succeeding year come enormous increases in the amount of overtime worked by women and young persons. Making all due allowance for the extra number of hands employed during the current year, there has been an abnormal increase in this respect. The total hours for which permits were issued for the year 1901 is 63,348, as against 42,024 for the preceding year, an increase of over 50 per cent. There is no questioning the fact that overtime is, in some cases, injurious to the health of the workers, and where young girls and boys are concerned a curtailment of the present overtime regulations would, in my opinion, be very beneficial.

Special attention has been paid to the cleanliness and sanitary arrangements of the various factories and workrooms, and very little trouble has been experienced in getting occupiers to effect improvements where required in this important matter. There is still something additional to be desired in this respect, but this cannot be accomplished until the structural defects of some of the buildings are remedied and a proper drainage system instituted in place of the present unsatisfactory arrangements. Several new factories and workrooms have recently been erected, and others are now in course of construction, and, in these cases, due attention has been paid to the convenience and comfort of the employés.

It is regrettable to report that accidents have been more numerous than in former years, one resulting fatally. Fortunately, the majority of them cannot be looked upon as being of a serious nature. The increase in this respect may to a certain extent be put down to night-shift work in foundries and engineering shops. By way of comparison, it may be stated that the number of accidents for the year 1900 was nineteen, and for the period under review they amounted to thirty-eight.

Employers show a disposition to observe all necessary precautions in the way of guarding machinery to prevent accidents. It was found necessary, however, to prosecute a flaxmill proprietor for laxity in this respect, a conviction and fine being the result, accompanied with a caution from the Bench to others conducting similar industries.

Former reports have intimated the extreme dissatisfaction which exists amongst employés regarding the law permitting employers to work their employés the full forty-eight hours per week. These complaints are still rife, and the general opinion goes in the direction of the Factories Act being amended to revert to the Act of 1891, which provided for forty-five hours per week.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

The restricted application of this Act permits of employés in commercial, mercantile, and other businesses being called upon to do night-work, for which they rarely, if ever, receive adequate remuneration. A great deal of misapprehension prevails as to those who are entitled to the provisions of the Act, and numerous complaints reach me from those who do not come within its scope. Until the Act is made to apply to all the assistants, clerical or otherwise, this state of things will continue.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

In this district there are fourteen persons carrying on business as servants' registry office keepers, three new licenses being granted and three surrendered during the year. Matters in connection with these places are satisfactory, and no complaints have been brought under my notice of any breaches of the law.

I have, &c.,

H. MAXWELL, Inspector of Factories.

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

GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Gisborne, 31st March, 1901.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report for the year ending 31st March, 1901.

Up to date fifty-eight factories have been registered, an increase of eight on the previous year, employing 460 males and eighty-five females, totalling 550, an increase of ninety on the previous year.

During the year ten permits were granted to young persons to work in factories. Thirty-nine permits were granted for nine persons to work 140 hours overtime in the tailoring trade, and twelve permits for eight persons to work fifty-four hours overtime in the dressmaking trade; seventeen permits were granted to eight shop-assistants to work fifty-one hours overtime.

Four registry offices were registered during the year, all of which were renewals.

The Factories and Shops and Shop-assistants Acts have worked smoothly in the district during the year. The employers not seeking to evade the provisions of the Acts, there has been no necessity for any prosecutions to be instituted.

In reporting on the state of the labour-market, I am pleased to be able to state that all trades are flourishing, and manual labour is plentiful; consequently there are no willing hands idle.

MYLES DOYLE, Inspector of Factories.

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

NAPIER.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Napier, 31st March, 1901.

I have the honour to submit the following report dealing with matters connected with the department under my charge for the year ending 31st March, 1901:—

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