

EMPLOYMENT OF BOYS OR GIRLS WITHOUT PAYMENT PREVENTION ACT.

I have had very little trouble with this Act. Tailors and dressmakers, however, complain that apprentices for the first three or four months do not, taking into consideration the time wasted in showing them, earn their wages. There has been one case under this Act for not paying a girl the minimum amount of wages, when defendant was fined and subsequently compelled to pay the arrears.

WAGES PROTECTION ACT.

No complaints have been made to me, and from inquiries I have made I believe employers strictly observe the provisions of the Act.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY-OFFICES.

Eight licenses have been issued. The offices are well conducted, and no complaints have reached me.

In conclusion, I have again the pleasure of informing you that this district is progressing in a very satisfactory manner.

I have, &c.,

W. J. BLAKE, Inspector.

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

PALMERSTON NORTH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Palmerston North, 31st March, 1901.

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

THE LABOUR MARKET.

I have to report a very satisfactory state of things for the year under review. It can be said on all sides that there was no lack of employment for the workers. The dairying industry is in full swing; farmers who for years past were breeders of sheep and cattle have now turned their attention to dairying, giving employment to three times the number of men formerly employed. The building trade was exceptionally good during the year; first-class tradesmen were in demand, and good wages have been given.

FABRIKES ACT.

During the year I have registered 107 factories giving employment to 679 persons—144 females, 535 males—a large increase on last year's return. The whole of the factories are well conducted and under good management; all are kept in a clean and sanitary state, and no complaints have been made. Several permits were granted during the busy seasons to work overtime. There were no accidents and no prosecutions, excepting one which was pending, and referred to in my last report.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act works very well in this district—much better than at first. The half-holiday is closely observed. There were no prosecutions during the year, and very few complaints, as the shop-keepers are thoroughly educated to the Act and its provisions.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are five license-holders under this Act. They conduct their business according to scale. No prosecutions have taken place during the twelve months, and no complaints have been made.

EMPLOYMENT OF BOYS OR GIRLS WITHOUT PAYMENT PREVENTION ACT.

I have had no difficulty with this Act. The provisions are very clear and concise in their meaning. No prosecutions have taken place during the year, and no complaints have been made.

I have, &c.,

T. BREEN, Inspector of Factories.

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

FOXTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Foxton, 30th March, 1901.

I respectfully report that during the year ended the 31st March, 1901, I have registered twenty-eight factories in my district, eleven of which are flax-mills.

There were six accidents reported during the year, none of which were fatal.

There have been two prosecutions, one for failing to report accident and one for failing to register factory, both of which resulted in fines being inflicted.

Generally the provisions of the Shops and Factories Acts are well observed.

There has been a slackness of work during the year until the last two months, when the flax-mills re-opened. The building trade is also, at present, brisk here.

There is one matter that I consider requires the attention of the department, and that is the regulation of accommodation provided at the flax-mills. At these mills in the country the accommodation, in some instances, is very indifferent, and, in my opinion, a clause should be inserted in the Factories Act similar to the Shearers' Accommodation Act. Flax-mill hands require good accommodation, their work being of a very dirty class, and the majority of them being wet nearly all day. In some instances that have come under my notice, the men's accommodation was not fit for pigs to live in, and the millers will not provide accommodation unless compelled to do so. In one instance I found the kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom all one; at