

With respect to the working of the Factory Acts, I find no difficulty in enforcing them. The people are getting educated into the working of the Acts, the employes get the holidays, and no complaints have been made.

During the year very few applications have been made by unemployed.

JAS. O'MALLEY, Inspector of Factories.

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

BLenheim.

SIR,—

Police-station, Blenheim, 23rd March, 1901.

I have the honour of submitting to you my report for the year ending the 31st March, 1901. The number of factories in this district on the 31st March was sixty-five, employing 244 males and twenty-nine females. On the same date last year there were sixty-six factories, employing 321 males and twenty-seven females. These figures show a decrease of one in the number of factories, a decrease of seventy-seven males, and an increase of two females. The removal of the Christchurch Meat Company's factory from Spring Creek to Picton is accountable for a decrease of thirty hands in connection with the above numbers of male employes.

There were no prosecutions under the Factories Act or the Shops and Shop-assistants Act. The factories have been carried on in a satisfactory manner. In the early part of the year the Chief Inspector visited the district, and expressed himself as satisfied with existing conditions.

With reference to labour legislation, I would like to point out that men employed in livery and bait stables work very long hours, which extend well into the night, and there is no means of applying to their case the beneficial provisions that are enjoyed by the other branches of labour.

The labour-market was throughout the year in a flourishing condition; at times it was not possible to obtain workmen here, and generally there need not have been an idle man in the whole of the district. All labour was absorbed principally at harvesting and shearing operations, and at road-works in the Awatere Top Valley and the Sounds.

The building trade has been brisk, and the River Board flood relief-works have given employment to some thirty men.

Agricultural interests were detrimentally affected by a flood at the beginning of the season, and bad weather later on. But, nevertheless, it is believed that the harvest will be up to the average. The shearing season was a fairly good one, and settlers benefited largely by the high prices for sheep. A large number of sheep were forwarded to the Canterbury markets.

The settlement at Seddon has progressed satisfactorily. Good crops were obtained last year. The sheep flocks are being enlarged, and the landowners are establishing themselves on a sound footing. A township is springing up, and the railway and bridge connecting the settlement with Blenheim are on the eve of completion. Already a large number of sheep have gone along the line, from the Awatere to Picton freezing-works.

With respect to gold-mining matters, increased attention has been directed to the Top Valley fields. Two batteries are in position; several dredging and quartz-claims have been taken up, and it is anticipated that within a few months the resources of the place will have been properly tested.

The shearers' accommodation in the district is, on the whole, satisfactory.

There were no accidents in the factories during the year.

I have, &c.,

P. H. PRICE, Inspector of Factories.

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

NELSON.

SIR,—

Police-station, Nelson, 31st March, 1901.

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

FACTORIES ACT.

During the year 129 Factories have been registered, employing 749 persons—599 males and 150 females. All factories appear to have plenty to do, and during the year a large amount of overtime has been worked. There have been no prosecutions, and no difficulty experienced in carrying out the provisions of the Act.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act gives general satisfaction here to both employer and employé. The sitting-accommodation where females are employed is now satisfactory. The half-holiday is observed by all, and there have been no prosecutions during the year.

LABOUR.

I received very few applications for work during the year, and those who did apply usually found work themselves within a few days. The formation-works for the extension of the railway at Motupiko have now commenced, and all unemployed in this district have found work there. Tradesmen generally have had a good year. The progress of this district has been remarkable; a large number of buildings have been erected, and a large number are now in course of erection. Builders, carpenters, and painters have had an exceedingly good year.

CHAS. E. ALDRIDGE, Inspector of Factories.

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