

FACTORIES ACT.

During the year I have registered 115 factories, giving employment to 742 persons—593 males and 149 females. All the factories have been well conducted; no prosecutions have taken place. One fatal accident took place during the year.

The new Factories Act is apparently giving general satisfaction. No doubt it is an improvement on the old Act of 1894: the hours of labour are clearly defined.

During the busy season of the year factories in which tailoring, dressmaking, shirtmaking, &c., is carried on work a deal of overtime.

There are nine shearing-sheds in this district; they all come under section 12 of the Act.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act is working well in this district, the holidays and half-holidays are well observed, and no prosecutions have taken place within the last year.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Under the above Act the holders of licenses are most respectable, and they conduct their businesses on fair and honest lines. No complaints have been made.

I have, &c.,
T. BREEN,
Inspector of Factories.

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

EKETAHUNA.

SIR,—

Labour Office, Eketahuna, 31st March, 1902.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for year ending the 31st March, 1902.

FACTORIES.

There have been 25 factories registered, the same number as the preceding year.

Employment was found in the different factories for 114 males and 3 females. About a hundred men were employed at the sawmills who do not come under the provisions of the Factories Act, consisting of bushfellers, bullock-drivers, and tram and wagon drivers. About fifty per cent. of the total number are married men, with nearly two hundred and fifty women and children depending on them.

During the year one sawmill was closed, and two others were shut down for a time owing to slack orders.

There has been only one case of accident in a factory reported (a sawmill). Four or five occurred in the bush, two resulting fatally. An inquest was held in each case, and a verdict of "Accidentally killed" returned. Lithograph plans of saw-guard were received from the Department of Labour Office, Wellington, and distributed amongst the sawmillers, urging them to use that or some equally effective one; to date no reply has been received regarding the matter, but I think the expense will prevent its adoption. Owing to the sawmillers forming an association the price of timber has been considerably increased in this district.

I have heard no objections to the Factories Act, and am of opinion that it is working well.

SHOP-ASSISTANTS.

The provisions of the Shop-assistants Act have been fairly complied with, there being no friction. There is no legal half-holiday in this district; the shopkeepers, by an understanding amongst themselves, close on Thursday afternoons.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A considerable amount of work has been done during the past year in the district, consisting of bushfelling, grass-seed cutting, shearing, and road contracting. Several road-metal contracts have been commenced, and are being gone on with; others are being commenced. Several settlers are giving up sheep-farming on account of the low price of wool, and are turning their attention to the dairy industry.

DAIRY INDUSTRY.

Two new creameries were erected during the year, and there is talk of others being erected during the coming year. From what I can learn the past season has been very satisfactory to the milk-suppliers, owing to the good season experienced and the unusual amount of good grass.

LABOUR, ETC.

There have been no applicants for work during the past year at this office, the Government Road Inspectors engaging men when required. Local labouring-men do not complain of scarcity of work. The usual men, old and young, who do not want work, and the few who do want work, have passed through during the year.

I have, &c.,
CHARLES GREY,
Inspector of Factories.

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

MASTERTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Masterton, 22nd April, 1902.

I beg to report that 93 factories have been registered for the period ending the 31st March, 1902.