

At the beginning of the year several men were working on the Awatere Railway works, but recently operations on the line were completely stopped. The stoppage did not, however, have the result of creating any unemployed, the men quickly finding work in other directions. There are now about fifteen men employed on the line.

The building trade has been fully occupied.

In gold-mining, the hopes with which the year opened in regard to the development of certain mining areas have not been realised, but the industry gives employment to a fair number of men.

A movement with a view to extension of the dairy industry was set on foot, and steps have been taken for the establishment of creameries in two or three localities.

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

I have, &c.,

T. H. PRICE, Agent.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 31st March, 1902.

I have the honour to report on the working of the various Acts in connection with the Labour Department as follows:—

FACTORIES ACT.

During the year 131 factories were registered. This Act, with the exception of section 31, continues to give general satisfaction to both employer and employee, and in no case has any difficulty been experienced in carrying out its provisions. There have been no prosecutions during the year, although in a few cases cautions had to be administered to occupiers as to payment of wages, breaches of the Truck Act, &c.; but I am glad to say that these cautions always had the desired effect.

With regard to the section above mentioned, a considerable amount of dissatisfaction has been expressed by both employer and employee, who consider it unfair that boys and girls should be paid according to age instead of length of service or ability. They contend that a boy or girl who has never received employment in a factory until he or she is, say, eighteen or twenty years of age stands a very poor chance against a boy or girl of fifteen years, who can be employed for 5s. per week, while 14s. or 17s. would have to be paid the former; and in most cases, without previous knowledge, a boy or girl fifteen years of age would be as good as a boy or girl eighteen or twenty years.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act also gives general satisfaction here, and no difficulty has been experienced in carrying out its provisions. The half-holiday is observed by all, and there have been no prosecutions during the year.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

I visited the only shearing-sheds in the district—namely, three—during shearing, and found everything satisfactory. The accommodation provided for the shearers was in each case both roomy and airy. The shearers expressed themselves as well pleased.

LABOUR.

Tradespeople generally have had a really good year. The progress of the city in the building trade has been remarkable, a large number of buildings having been erected during the year, and a large number being still in course of erection. Carpenters, painters, &c., have had a very busy year.

There have been very few applicants for employment during the year; those who did apply soon found employment themselves on private works or were sent to the Motupiko-Tadmor Railway extension.

I have, &c.

C. E. ALDRIDGE,
Inspector of Factories.

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

WESTPORT.

SIR,—

Police-station, Westport, 20th March, 1902.

I have the honour to submit my report on the working of the various Acts under control of your Department in this district during the past year.

FACTORIES.

During the past year 37 factories were registered under this Act, giving employment to 154 persons—122 males and 32 females—a decrease on the previous year of 3 factories and 12 persons.

Overtime permits were granted to 10 persons—3 males and 7 females—the number of hours was 483. In no single instance has the limit allowed by the Act been exceeded. Overtime was entirely confined to tailoring establishments. Two permits to young persons have been issued—1 male and 1 female.

The Act is working very satisfactorily. No complaints have been made from employers or employees. The working-hours and half-holiday are strictly observed. No accidents have been reported during the year, and no prosecutions have taken place.