

HOKITIKA.

SIR,—

Hokitika, 15th April, 1902.

I beg to report that during the past year there has been very little trouble with the factories; in fact, there are very few young people engaged, and full time is not generally worked. The Act of 1901 does not interfere with any of the factories, as the wages given are fairly good. There have been no prosecutions during the year, nor have there been any complaints; however, of course a certain amount of supervision is necessary.

There are no public works going on in this district at present, but during the year many men have been employed making water-races and constructing dredges, where good wages are made, also at sawmills and bush-work; but mining is the support of the place, and men who cannot get other work generally find employment mining on their own account or working for wages, and some of them have really good claims. Sometimes there are complaints of the scarcity of work, but invariably from elderly men who have got homes, and will not go far in quest of employment; but these men frequently manage to secure small contracts about the town, or work at road-making. On the whole, the labouring-class here is more comfortable than in any part of New Zealand where I have lived. Skilled labour is well paid, and especially carpenters, who have always plenty to do, and have no opposition from outsiders. Blacksmiths and wheelwrights are doing a good business.

Several dredges have been erected during the year, a few of which are doing well, but the sanguine expectations entertained last year have not been fully realised.

The Ross Railway formation and the Hokitika Railway-bridge are expected to be in hand this year, and will no doubt employ many men, and will benefit the district generally.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. McDONALD,
Inspector of Factories.

J. Mackay, Esq., Department of Labour, Wellington.

ASHBURTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Ashburton, 31st March, 1902.

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

Trade has, on the whole, been fairly brisk, and the town is rapidly going ahead. A large number of buildings have been erected. The new post-office building is one of the finest buildings in Canterbury, and there are several new buildings in course of erection. The Fairfield Freezing-works have enlarged their buildings during the year to double the former size, and on my last visit to the works there were thirty butchers on the slaughtering-board; and, with fellmongering, preserving, and manure-works, the Fairfield Freezing-works, on the whole, are a great boon to Ashburton.

With regard to factories, I have had no new ones to register since my last annual report. At present there are about seventy factories in this sub-district. There were two accidents during the past twelve months, which were very slight; and I am pleased to say I have not had occasion to prosecute any person under the above Act, and, on the whole, employers and employees have worked amicably together. Although the factories have worked full time, I have had to grant very few overtime permits.

Re Shops and Shop-assistants Act: With the exception of a few sanitary matters, the Act has worked well here during the past twelve months, and there is very little reason to complain; and I may say that the spirit of the Act has been fairly observed, there being only two prosecutions (convictions recorded in both cases) during the past year. But, as I mentioned in my last annual report *re* the auctioneers holding large sales in the borough on a statutory half-holiday, I am still of the opinion they should come within the Act, as it is a great inducement to the shop-keepers to sell from their back doors.

Re the Servants' Registry Offices Act: There are two offices licensed in this district, both in the hands of capable people. They have given the Department no trouble, and I have had no complaint of any person being overcharged.

Re Shearers' Accommodation Act: I visited the shearing-sheds in my sub-district last season, and found the accommodation in accordance with the Act. I may say there is a vast difference in the comfort for shearers since the Act came into operation.

Labour: I am pleased to say that I have had very little trouble during the year, as I received only ten applications for the whole period. This I attribute to the prosperous state of the district.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD EADE,
Inspector of Factories.

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

TIMARU.

SIR,—

Labour Department, Timaru, 1st May, 1902.

I have the honour to submit to you a report of the various Acts, &c., under my charge for the year ending the 31st March, 1902.

FACTORIES ACT.

During the year 125 factories were registered in the district, and permits of fitness to the number of 64 were granted to young people under the age of sixteen years. The sanitary