

CARTERTON.

SIR,—

Carterton, 21st March, 1903.

I have the honour to forward a report on labour generally in this sub-district for the year ending the 31st March, 1903 :—

There has been a greater demand for labourers this year, particularly during the past six months, than during any previous year since I have been here, and a great many strangers are now in this district at different kinds of employment, which proves the healthy state of the locality, and its general prosperity.

I have at different periods during the year visited the factories in my district, and have found their condition satisfactory. I have never at any time received any complaints. I consider the labour laws are fairly well respected, and generally looked upon as a great benefit to the workers.

There are 40 factories registered in this district, employing 150 men and 10 females.

I have, &c.,

F. CHAS. SMITH,

Inspector of Factories.

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

BLENHEIM.

SIR,—

Blenheim, 4th April, 1903.

I have the honour of submitting my annual report for the Blenheim district for the year ended the 31st March last.

Eighty-two factories were registered, being an increase of 19 on that of the previous year the number employed therein being 361—viz., 331 males and 30 females. These figures represent a considerable increase on those of the previous year in regard to males, who increased by 118; but the females employed show a falling-off of 6. The decrease is due to one or two of the larger establishments doing with less hands, and in this district there is very little opening for females, there being no woollen-mills or other industries to employ them, although the district is greatly adapted for such an industry, as pastoral pursuits are largely followed throughout the province, and several of the stations shear as many as fifty thousand sheep, and all this wool has to pass through Blenheim *en route* to the different markets, so that a woollen-mill here would have a distinct advantage in that it would be operating in the heart of one of the largest wool-growing districts in the colony.

Among the factories brought into existence during the last twelve months are a flour-mill and 5 flaxmills. The prices maintained for grain have been a feature of the year, and there are now 3 flour-mills in the district working full time and employing a considerable amount of labour. There are also 15 flaxmills at work, and to this industry is due no small amount of the prosperity of the district, and as good wages are paid by the mill-owners, it is no doubt due to this fact that so few unemployed have been seen during the year.

There has been only one prosecution, a conviction being obtained.

Although some anxiety was felt at the beginning of the season on account of the continued dry weather, and many farmers feared that the harvest would be a failure, they have had an excellent harvest, and were put in good heart by satisfactory prices. This state of things had a favourable bearing on the labour-market, and the wages of threshing-mill hands was increased from 7s. per day and found to 8s. per day and found.

The shearers' accommodation is, as a rule, good. Improvements have been ordered to be made at several of the stations.

In gold-mining there has been a considerable slump, and two valuable dredges are now lying idle on their claims after only a few weeks' work, but the industry still gives employment to a fair number of men.

Building and allied trades have also been brisk.

Engineers have all worked full time, and artisans and tradesmen generally have made full time during the year.

The dairy industry in this district has been somewhat neglected in the past, and full advantage has not been taken of its capabilities. This season, however, it has shown signs of improvement. A dairy company operating on a fairly large scale has been formed, and the only factory in the district has under its auspices been renovated and improved, new machinery installed, and a creamery to connect with the factory erected at Okaramio. This advance in the industry has already absorbed a fair number of hands, and the number will doubtless be increased.

No claims under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act passed through my hands during the year, and employers generally now fall into line with the Act by insuring their employees.

D. CARMODY, Agent.

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

NELSON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Nelson, 31st March, 1903.

I have the honour to report on the working of this Department for the year ending the 31st March, 1903, as follows :—

It is my pleasing duty to again report a prosperous year among tradespeople generally throughout this district. The progress of the city has been remarkable, quite a large number of buildings having been erected, and a number are still in course of erection. Carpenters, builders, and painters have had a really good year. The engineering and iron trades have also had a prosperous year, and a large amount of overtime has been worked. Generally speaking, the future prospects of this district are good.