

A fresh industry has started during the past year—viz., brickmaking, on the Smart Road, a short distance from town—and is likely to do a fair trade.

The borough works now in progress—viz., drainage and sewerage, improved water-supply, together with the electric light—have been the means of affording steady employment to a fair number of the labouring-class.

One conviction was obtained against an employer for working girls after hours without a permit.

No accidents have taken place during the past year.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

Under this Act one employer was convicted for employing labour on the weekly half-holiday.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

The three persons registered under this Act supply a want, and give satisfaction to all parties interested.

I have, &c.,

WALTER H. HADDRELL,
Inspector of Factories.

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

MASTERTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Masterton, 4th May, 1904.

I have the honour to present to you my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1904.

FACTORIES ACT.

Under this Act there were 90 factories registered during the present year, employing 402 males and 68 females, making a total of 470, as against 438 males and 51 females for the year 1903, a decrease of 19 for this year. The decrease is accounted for by a few flax-mills closing down, the flax being cut out.

Four accidents were reported during the past year, one man being killed at a sawmill by a tree falling on him; the other three were slight.

The factories have been well conducted, no complaints having been made and no prosecutions have taken place.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

The Act is working well. The holidays and half-holidays have been well observed, and no complaints were made by any one of not having obtained the holidays.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are three licensed holders under this Act. The registry offices are well conducted. I have received no complaints from those seeking or obtaining employment.

I have, &c.,

JAS. O'MALLEY,
Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

BLLENHEIM.

SIR,—

Labour Department, Blenheim, 19th April, 1904.

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

The number of factories registered was 79, a decrease of 3 on that of the previous year. The total number of hands employed, however, shows an increase, the figures being males 371 and females 23. The males increased by 10 and the females decreased by 7. The diminution among the females is due to the varying conditions of the dressmaking trade.

Labour was comfortably absorbed during the year, either by public works or private employment. A factor which should tend to increase the number of employed in the near future is the establishment of the Wellington and Marlborough Lime and Cement Company's works, about three miles from Picton. It is expected that the industry will be giving employment within a year or so to sixty or seventy hands.

The farmers have had a successful year, the returns being profitable, though the prices were not so high as those of the previous year; the harvest was a good one, though unfortunately some heavy individual losses were sustained through a flood of exceptional severity which occurred in March. Those farmers who suffered, however, bore their losses with an admirable spirit, and the particular localities affected have made a wonderful recovery. Wages on farms generally have been good.

The flax industry has maintained its prosperity and still gives employment to a large number of hands, and it is without doubt due to the large number of men required at the flax-mills that so few unemployed have been seen during the year.

In the gold-mining industry, which has been at a discount for some time, there is nothing new to report.

The building trade has been very brisk, and good carpenters have been hard to obtain.

The engineering trade has been kept fairly busy, operations being mostly in the nature of repairs. Trade in general has been good.

Both the dairy and poultry industries have made solid advancement, and the extension of poultry-farming is a marked feature.