

The shearers' accommodation as a whole is good. Exceptions were noted in the case of some back-country places, where the supply of timber and building-labour were matters of difficulty; but the station-holders spoken to have agreed to make improvements.

There was one prosecution under the Shops and Shop-assistants Act, and a conviction recorded. No trouble has been experienced in the working of this Act, employers generally looking forward to the half-holiday with as much pleasure as the employees. It is recognised, however, that the public convenience would be much better served if the shops half-holiday and the factories half-holiday were observed on the one day.

Two accidents were reported during the year, both unfortunately proving fatal.

I have, &c.,

D. CARMODY,

Inspector of Factories.

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

NELSON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Nelson, 31st March, 1904.

I have the honour to report on the working of the various Acts in connection with this Department for the year ending the 31st March, 1904, as follows :—

It is my pleasing duty to again report a prosperous year. The progress of the city during the last twelve months has been remarkable, and business generally throughout the district is steadily on the increase. Building trades generally have been very brisk; a great number of buildings have been erected, and a large number are still in course of erection.

Messrs. Griffin and Son's large biscuit-factory was destroyed by fire during the year, whereby about 115 hands were thrown out of employment. However, temporary premises have been erected and a number of hands again employed. The rebuilding of the new factory has commenced, and the company hope to again be in full swing before the end of the year with a much larger factory on more up-to-date lines.

FACTORIES ACT.

During the year 171 factories were registered, employing 806 males and 247 females. The Act continues to give general satisfaction to both employer and employee, and no difficulty has been experienced in carrying out its provisions. There seems to be a general desire on the part of factory-occupiers to comply with the Act, and I have had no occasion to prosecute any person during the year.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act also continues to give general satisfaction here, and no difficulty has been experienced in enforcing its provisions. The shops are all kept in a very sanitary state, and the comfort of assistants is well considered. I have had no prosecutions during the year.

Re the half-holiday: A feeling still exists among employees and also among a number of employers here that Saturday would be a better day for the closing of shops. I hope that before long Saturday will be appointed closing-day throughout the colony.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION.

There are only three shearing-sheds in this district, and in each case the accommodation provided is satisfactory.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES.

There are no offices under this Act in this district.

LABOUR.

There are very few unemployed in this district. Thirty-six men were sent from this office to the railway-works at Motupiko, and several others were sent to private employment. Any person really wanting work can easily obtain it.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

I have until quite recently had very little to do under this Act, as there were no awards or agreements here until a few months ago. The painters' agreement came into force in October last; since then I have had to cite two persons before the Arbitration Court for breach of the agreement in not paying the minimum wage fixed to certain employees, and three convictions followed. Industrial agreements were new to these persons, and they did not know to what extent the agreement bound them. The prosecutions thoroughly showed them their position, and I think will do a large amount of good.

Yours, &c.,

C. E. ALDRIDGE,

Inspector of Factories.

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