

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are only two of these offices in this town, and they are conducted satisfactorily.

LABOUR.

During the year the "unemployed" difficulty has been a comparatively easy matter to cope with, although some hundreds of young men from Victoria and New South Wales have arrived here, the great majority of whom found harvest-work at good wages. There has been and still is a great scarcity of good ploughmen in South Canterbury.

We assisted during the year 112 men with 76 dependants—namely, 15 married and 97 single.

The building trade in all its different branches has been abnormally busy during the year. Trades-people are all busy, and farmers are having a good time owing to the increased price of wool, and to lambs selling up to 17s. each, notwithstanding the low price of grain.

I have, &c.,

P. KEDDIE,

Inspector of Factories.

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

WAIMATE.

SIR,—

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

I have the honour of submitting to you my annual report on the working of the various labour Acts under my charge for the year ending the 31st March.

During the year fifty-six factories have been registered, the same number as for last year. The sanitary conditions of the factories are good. Every branch of trade has been active. Three factory-owners have been prosecuted for employing females on the half-holiday; each was convicted and fined.

There has been a large influx of Australians into this district in search of harvest-work. It being a bountiful harvest, all obtained employment. Notwithstanding the large number of Australians, there is almost an entire absence of swaggers on the roads; they mostly travel by rail to the various parts of the district in search of harvest-work.

The Shops and Shop-assistants Act continues to work satisfactorily, and there is very little trouble in enforcing its provisions.

I have, &c.,

A. CHRISTIE,

Inspector of Factories.

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

OAMARU.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Oamaru, 10th April, 1904.

I have the honour to submit for your information a report upon the working of the Factories Act, the Shops and Shop-assistants Act, and on the condition of labour in this district for the year ending the 31st March, 1904.

FACTORIES.

Sixty-three factories have been registered, in good and suitable buildings, well kept and well ventilated. I have found very little trouble in getting employers to carry out the provisions of the Act. The woollen-mill—the principal factory in my district—has been well managed, and the manager has shown a desire to do everything for the comfort and well-being of the employees. The other places registered as factories or workrooms have been well kept, and in only a few instances have I found it necessary to have certain improvements effected, which were always done at my request, the employers showing a desire to meet the wishes of the Department.

I have issued permits to 5 boys and 6 girls under sixteen years of age, and warrants for over-time to 31 males, who worked 170 hours, and 80 females, who worked 1,028 hours.

There are 335 males and 141 females employed in factories and workrooms in the district, and all seem content with the way they are treated.

There was only one prosecution for working overtime without permit. A fine of £1 and costs was inflicted.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act has worked satisfactorily. Thursday is the half-holiday. I have had little or no trouble in carrying out the provisions of the law, as the people now know what is required of them, and show a willing desire to observe the law.

LABOUR.

I am glad to say that the past year has been a good one for labouring-people in this district. I have not had the same trouble as in previous years. This is accounted for to a large extent as most of the old hands were sent to co-operative works in the North Island, where many of them have settled on land, and taken their families with them. Farming and dairying provide employment for the youth of the district, who receive good wages, and settle down to it. All trades have been busy during the period, and it is often difficult to obtain good hands at higher wages. I am glad to report a great improvement in labour during the past year.

As Inspector of Awards I have had some work with the Tailors' Union, but employers now realise their position, and I do not anticipate any trouble to speak of in future.

I have visited and inspected shearing-sheds in my district during the progress of the work, and, with one exception, I found the sheds in good order, and the sleeping-accommodation good.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS O'GRADY,

Inspector of Factories.

E. Tregear, Esq., Secretary for Labour, Wellington.