

Iron trade: Although the number of men employed in this industry is not so great as during the previous two years, the cause of which I explained last year, still those that are left have had a good year's work. I have not heard of any loss of time through slackness of trade, and the overtime returns show that a good deal of overtime has been worked.

The boot trade has been fairly steady. There was a little slackness for about six weeks, but the loss of time was nothing like that usually experienced in this trade in the larger centres.

The clothing trade has been good, and for several months was exceptionally so. With most of the firms the limit of overtime allowed to women was worked.

Employment in other skilled trades has been good, except in coachbuilding, which was a little quiet for two or three months.

Bush sawmills have all kept going steadily throughout the year, and there has at various periods been a good demand for competent men.

Flax-milling: This industry is increasing very rapidly. There are now sixty-two flax-mills in Southland, which give direct employment to 930 men and boys. This estimate is based on an average of fifteen hands to each mill, which I think is not too high if flax-cutters, carters, and paddock hands are counted. These are not usually included in the annual factory returns, though there is no doubt the paddock hands should be included. I insist on their inclusion with all mills registered with me. There are twenty-two of these mills registered in the Wyndham Police District, and fourteen in this district. The others are scattered over the Orepuki, Riverton, Otatau, and Lumsden Police Districts, and, of course, are registered in the district in which they are situated. Last year two fatal accidents occurred in flax-mills, but this year, I am pleased to say, I have not heard of any serious accidents.

Unskilled labour: This has been an exceptionally good year from a worker's point of view. At no time has there been any glut in the labour-market; in fact, for the greater part of the year the demand has been in excess of the supply, and the ordinary unemployed have been totally absent. Employment has been found for thirty-five men. Of this number only two were sent to Government work, and they were urgently required for bridge-building; the rest were sent to private employment, principally to flax-mills.

THE FACTORIES ACT.

There are 231 factories and workrooms registered in this district, employing 1,832 persons—viz., 1,457 males and 375 females. Forty-three permits were issued to boys and girls under section 27, and two under subsection (6) of the same section. The amount of overtime worked by males was 10,060 hours, and by females 9,004½ hours. This is fifty more than were worked the previous year. This Act is now working very smoothly, though, of course, it is necessary to be always on the alert. I laid seven charges for breaches of this Act, all of which were successful. There was only one charge laid in the Invercargill district; the others were in Wyndham.

Ten accidents were reported and inquired into. The most serious was that of a young man who lost a finger and got his hand badly cut on a surface-planer; the others were all of a comparatively slight nature.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act continues to work well. No prosecutions have been necessary to enforce its provisions.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are seven registry offices here; they are well conducted and give no trouble.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The amendment to this Act of last year is calculated to cause more respect to be paid to awards, but for a time it will throw a great amount of work on Inspectors. This would be considerably lessened if breaches of agreements and awards could be taken before a Stipendiary Magistrate. As it is at present, a charge may be kept hanging for six or nine months, and in that time the witnesses may be scattered all over the colony.

I have, &c.,

L. D. BROWETT,

Inspector of Factories.

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

Reports have also been received from the Inspectors of Factories at Amberley, Akaroa, Aratapu, Arrowtown, Bull's, Cambridge, Clinton, Clive, Coalgate, Collingwood, Cromwell, Culverdan, Dargaville, Denniston, Eltham, Fairlie, Featherston, Foxton, Geraldine, Gore, Greytown North, Hampden, Hamilton, Hawksbury, Hikurangi, Hokiana, Huntville, Huntly, Inglewood, Kaitia, Kaitangata, Karangahake, Kihikihi, Kimbolton, Lawrence, Leeston, Levin, Little River, Mangaweka, Mangonui, Martinborough, Marton, Mercer, Methven, Middlemarch, Milton, Moawhanga, Mosgiel, Naseby, Ngapara, Ongarue, Opunake, Ophir, Orepuki, Ormondville, Otahuhu, Otorohanga, Outram, Oxford, Paeroa, Pahiatua, Palmerston South, Papakura, Patea, Pembroke, Picton, Pleasant Point, Porangahau, Queenstown, Reefton, Riverton, Roxburgh, Southbridge, St. Bathans, Takaka, Tapanui, Taihape, Tauranga, Te Aroha, Te Awamutu, Tenui, Te Puke, Tolaga Bay, Upper Hutt, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Waitahuna, and Waitara.