

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 27th June, 1906.

I have the honour to report on the general working of the Department for the year 1905-6.

Correspondence shows an increase on that of the previous year, and is as follows: Outward—letters, 6,630; telegrams, circular letters, and circulars, 6,000: Inward—letters, 7,060; telegrams, 960. Letters received from other countries, asking for information as to prospects of employment, rates of wages, land laws, labour laws, &c., show a large increase on that of last year.

During the year we published Vol. vi of Awards, Agreements, &c., under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Vol. iv of the Cases under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act, the fourth edition of the Labour Laws, and the usual monthly *Journal of Labour*.

The number of men dealt with during the year also shows a large increase on that of the previous year, and the number of workers from oversea is much greater than in any previous year since the inception of the Department. Work has been very plentiful, and no difficulty was experienced in placing good pick-and-shovel men and good farm hands. During the dairying season the usual dearth of workers in that industry was experienced.

The total number of persons who registered their names for employment in the Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin branches of the Department were 9,225, divided as follows: Canada, 38; Great Britain, 1,096; United States of America, 32; South Africa, 43; Commonwealth, 932; foreigners, 14 (this includes Germans, Scandinavians, French, Italians, &c.); New Zealanders, 7,070. Of this number 5,159 were actually sent to either public or private employment. One hundred and seventeen families were sent to join the husbands and fathers who had succeeded in making a home for them at the scene of employment. The greatest difficulty we have to contend with is the man who is unable (either from lack of physical ability, incompetence, or unwillingness) to tackle hard work. Many of our newcomers have queer notions as to what the colony is like, and the class of work to be had. Many have been greatly disappointed on arrival, and some have turned tail and gone back to the Old Country. I cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity at the other end of warning such as those to stay away. The man who wants nothing but light employment will, in many cases, fail to get it, and unless his physique and health are good enough to enable him to do hard work, he will go to the wall.

The number of new unions registered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act was—Workers, 12, with 583 members; employers', 14, with 143 members. Three associations were registered—two workers' and one employers'. Sixteen unions have been cancelled during the year—12 workers' and 4 employers'.

Twenty-five partial and 24 complete amendments of rules have been registered.

The Inspectors of Awards had a great deal to do during the year in inquiring into and conducting before the Court breaches of the many awards which are now in existence in the colony, employees as well as employers being cited before the Court. Detailed lists of these cases are to be found in another part of the report. Strict and careful inquiries are always made in every case before proceedings are taken. Proof of this is to be found in the exceedingly small number of cases which the Court has dismissed or decided against the Department.

The Factories Act causes little trouble to the Department; the same cannot be said as to the Shops Act: however, it is to be hoped that eventually it will be so made as to work as smoothly as the Factories Act.

Shearers' accommodation is all the time being improved and the conditions under which shearers are now housed is vastly different from what it was a few years ago.

The work of the Department is daily increasing, and everything is being done that is possible to better the condition of the workers without inflicting hardships upon and harassing the employer.

The Inspectors attached to the Department have done good work during the year, and I have to thank them for the promptitude in carrying out instructions which have been given them.

The Head Office staff has shown a great willingness to keep everything going smoothly, and when overtime has been required to be worked, or an extra effort was required to overtake the work, such has been cheerfully given.

I have, &c.,

J. MACKAY,

Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories and Chief Clerk.

The Chief Inspector of Factories.