

During the year thirteen permits were issued to young persons to work in factories; of these, 2 boys had passed Standard V, and of the girls, 3 had passed Standard IV, 4 Standard V, and 4 Standard VI.

There is a decrease in the amount of overtime worked as compared with last year: 68 females worked 884 hours, and 12 males worked 161 hours, making a total of 1,045 hours worked by 80 workers.

There was one prosecution against an employer for employing six girls without an interval for meals, and a fine of £2 and costs inflicted.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

This Act is working smoothly.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICE ACT.

Four new offices were registered during the year, and six licenses were renewed; all seem to be well conducted. No complaints have reached this office.

I have, &c.,

A. J. R. ISHERWOOD.

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

Inspector of Factories.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wanganui, 10th April, 1906.

I have the honour to submit my report for the period ending the 31st March.

During the period under review 160 factories were registered, finding employment for 1,028 males and 231 females. The number of employees has increased by 40 males and 23 females.

Overtime warrants were issued to 20 employers to work 130 women and boys 1,987 hours.

Certificates of fitness were issued to 5 boys and 8 girls.

Twenty accidents were reported; none were fatal, the most serious being caused by a man losing all the fingers of the right hand in a planing-machine.

There were six prosecutions under the Factories Act, four against one firm for failing to pay wages for statutory holidays as required by section 35 of the Factories Act of 1901. A penalty of £10 was imposed in two cases, and £5 each in the others.

Two occupiers pleaded guilty to the charge of failing to report accidents, and fines of 5s. and 10s., with costs, were imposed.

The Factories Act continues to work well in this district. Employers recognize that the Factories Act is the charter of factory-workers rights, and readily comply with the Act. It is again my pleasant duty to have to report the absence of friction between employers and workers.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The amending Act of 1905, which provides a schedule specifying the maximum number of hours of employment of assistants in the various lines of business, has greatly facilitated the working and administration of the principal Act.

Ten shopkeepers employed 99 assistants to work 1,359 hours overtime: 59 males worked 1,199 hours, and 40 females worked 260 hours.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Nine licenses were issued during the year, and without exception the offices are all conducted in a satisfactory manner.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

No complaints have reached me; one employer was requested to provide better sleeping-accommodation for his shearers; the request was complied with.

LABOUR.

Workers in all branches have experienced on the whole a prosperous year. A lull was felt by the workers in the building trades during the winter months, but with the advent of spring these trades picked up again, and good carpenters were difficult to obtain. Unskilled labourers have had a very good year; every man who has applied for work and was fit and willing to do the same has found employment.

A serious drawback to the worker in Wanganui providing a house for himself exists in the high prices ruling for timber, but it is hoped that this will be mitigated by the introduction of timber *via* the Wanganui River from the Taumaranui District, where there are very extensive areas of first-class milling timber; this will also give employment to a large number of hands who would be engaged in rafting it down the river.

There also seems a fair prospect of harbour-improvements, which will no doubt add to the growth of the town.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

During the past year only one case was taken to the Arbitration Court, and in this instance the defendant was fined £3 and costs for a breach of the bakers' award.

This Act works satisfactorily in Wanganui, and workers and employers appear to have confidence in the Department. Of course disputes often arise, and in these instances either the worker or the employer (sometimes both) applies to this office for information, and in most cases an amicable settlement is made. Twenty disputes have been settled in this manner.

I desire to thank all those whom I meet in the execution of my official duties for the invariable courtesy with which I have been treated.

I have, &c.,

W. MCQUARTERS,

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

Inspector of Factories.