

SIR,—

Department of Labour, New Plymouth, 18th April, 1906.

I beg to submit report on the working of the various Acts throughout the Taranaki District since my appointment, up to the 31st March, 1906.

The only trades working under awards are: The letterpress, lithographers, and machinists; boot-makers, printers, and carpenters. When I commenced my duties as Inspector of Factories in this district I made an exhaustive inspection of all business places in every town, and also country districts that come under my jurisdiction, and found that with the exception of Hawera, the Acts and awards were more or less a dead-letter, not with a wish altogether to evade them, but more for the want of a permanent officer of the Department residing in the district.

## SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The provisions referring to the half-holiday have always been adhered to, but the hours for assistants at nights, especially on the late night, have been very indifferently observed, and I have found it necessary to take action in a few cases to bring about an observance of the law in that respect.

## FATORIES ACT.

The bakery establishments throughout the district have been found to be in a very bad state, especially as regards sanitation. In nearly every instances throughout the district it was imperative to issue instructions for a thorough cleansing of the premises. The hours of assistants have been very long, in most cases they have been working from fifty to sixty-two hours per week without overtime being paid. A conference of master bakers was held to consider the matter of hours, &c., and since then there has been no difficulty.

Dressmakers and tailoresses: In a few cases girls were found to be underpaid, but the back pay has since been made good, and the majority of the employers pay higher wages than the Act provides. Occasions have arisen where it was necessary to issue warning for working girls after hours, and for taking them on to work under the age without a permit. The same remarks apply to printers and bootmakers.

The provisions of the Act have been fairly well observed in the other trades in the district.

## INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The awards in force in the district are being well observed. The employers appear to comply readily with their terms, and there is now a confidence existing between employers and employees which is satisfactory to all concerned.

Unfortunately trade generally for the whole time I have been here has been very slack, but there is now a tendency to improve.

I have, &amp;c.,

A. DONALD,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.

## MASTERTON.

SIR,—

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

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending the 31st of March, 1906.

## GENERAL.

I am pleased to be able to report that the period under review has been one of prosperity and progress.

Evidence of this is to be seen in the large increase in the numbers of buildings, for both residential and business purposes. As a consequence the building and allied trades have experienced a very busy year, and have kept a larger number of hands employed than during any previous period. The other trades have also been prosperous.

The engineering trade showed a very marked improvement during the latter portion of the year.

The volume of retail trade has largely increased, causing a corresponding increase in the number of shopkeepers, with the result that the business portion of the Borough of Masterton is rapidly filling up, and at the time of writing presents a very busy appearance, owing to the number of substantial brick buildings now in course of erection.

## FATORIES ACT.

The provisions of this Act have worked smoothly and without friction. The amendment of 1905 providing for registers of persons employed and the issue of certificates to employees showing period of employment, will greatly facilitate the enforcement of the payment of the minimum rate of wages therein provided.

Any sanitary or other improvement deemed necessary by me have been willingly carried out by factory-owners.

One prosecution has taken place under this Act. The Masterton Borough Council refused to register the municipal gasworks, contending that local bodies were not employers subject to the provisions of the Factory Act, also that gasworks were not "factories" within the meaning of the Act. The case was heard by Mr. W. P. James, S.M., who gave judgment against the Borough Council and inflicted a fine of £2 and costs, £2 2s.