

During the year 110 factories have been registered, employing 487 males and 83 females, a total of 570 employees. This is an increase of 9 factories and 74 employees (65 males and 9 females) since last report.

Certificates of Fitness.

Certificates of fitness have been issued to 10 females and 11 males under sixteen years of age, of whom 6 females and 6 males had passed Standard VI, 3 females and 5 males had passed Standard V, and 1 female had passed Standard IV.

Overtime.

3,248 hours overtime has been worked during the year by 42 males and 32 females.

Accidents.

Seven accidents were reported, mostly of a slight nature. The most serious being that of a youth aged fifteen who cut off the end of his thumb while working at a jointing-machine.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The enforcement of awards under this Act requires considerable attention. Many cases of alleged breaches of award in various trades have been inquired into throughout the Wairarapa District. Employers for the most part appear to be desirous of observing the provisions of the various awards, and where the breach is not wilful or of a serious nature matters have been arranged by the payment of back-wages, overtime, &c.

Several cases have been referred to the Arbitration Court, and convictions were recorded and fines inflicted in all except one case.

Many employers express the opinion that the awards are beneficial, inasmuch as they put all employers in a trade upon an equal footing, in so far as the rate of wages and the conditions of labour are concerned.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

Advantage was taken of section 21 of this Act, and, in response to a requisition under that section, the hours of all grocers', drapers' and clothiers' shops in the Borough of Masterton were gazetted in the 11th May, 1905—namely, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on four days and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on one day.

Two Chinese grocers were prosecuted and fined for committing breaches of the gazetted requisition.

The amendment of 1905, limiting the hours of shop-assistants to not later than 9 p.m. on the late night, made a rearrangement necessary, and most of the shops now close at 9 p.m. on Saturday instead of 10 p.m. as formerly. Three prosecutions were taken, under this amendment, against a firm for employing three assistants later than 9.30 p.m. on a Saturday night, and a fine was inflicted in each case.

The statutory half-holiday has been well observed. Four prosecutions have taken place, convictions being obtained and fines inflicted in each case. These convictions and fines have had a salutary effect, and have stopped the violation of statutory half-holiday provisions.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Five certificates have been issued during the year. There are at present four registry offices doing business.

Two complaints were made during the year, one proved groundless, and the remaining one was that men had come to Masterton from long distances, owing to registry-office advertisements, only to find upon arrival that the particular positions advertised had been filled for some time, and the advertisement not withdrawn. I found upon inquiry there was ground for this complaint, it being the custom to change the advertisement periodically.

The offices are all well conducted and the law *re* fees, &c., is well observed.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

I have inspected nine shearing-sheds in this district employing more than six shearers, and found the accommodation satisfactory. Any alteration or improvement requested by me was willingly carried out.

LABOUR.

What is termed "unskilled labour" cannot be said to have had a very good year. It is true that work has been fairly plentiful during the greater part of the time; but, owing to the extremely variable weather experienced in the spring and summer seasons, it has been impossible for outdoor workers to put in anything like full time.

There have been 116 applications for work, a fair percentage being from abroad, and some were not suitable for manual labour. Forty-eight men with seventy-six persons dependent upon them have been sent to Government or private employment from this branch of the Department.

In conclusion I may say the prospects for the coming year are good, and that at least the rate of progress during the past year will be maintained for some time to come.

I have, &c.,

W. NEWTON,

Inspector of Factories.

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