

Overtime in Shops.

Overtime warrants were issued for 4 males, who worked 124 hours, and 8 females, who worked 44 hours, total hours worked, 168.

SERVANTS REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There is one office registered under this Act, in the district, which is satisfactorily conducted by a capable and energetic proprietor.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT

There were several charges brought against the Union Steamship Company and the Blackball Coal Company for breaches of an industrial agreement, *which came before the Court in February last, in which judgment has not yet been delivered.* A charge brought by the Blackball Miners' Union against the Blackball Coal Company for breach of an industrial agreement was dismissed

LABOUR

The unskilled labour market fluctuated considerably during the year. At times the supply of labour greatly exceeded the demands, and at other times it fell much short of requirements. During the year there were 586 applicants seeking employment, of whom 198 were married, and 388 single persons, having 796 dependants. For the same period 203 men were found employment on the co-operative works at railway and road making, and many others were assisted in finding private employment.

No serious accident occurred on any of the co-operative works, and the few complaints reported were of a trifling nature.

EXPORTS.

The exports of timber and minerals from the Port of Greymouth for the year ending the 31st March, 1906, were as follows : Timber, 32,625,467 ft. ; sleepers, 77,855 ; coal, 241,429 tons ; coke, 2,532 tons ; bricks, 1,451 tons ; flax, 2,101 bales ; and for the same period, 95,247½ oz. of gold were exported.

SHIPPING.

The number and tonnage of vessels that visited the port for the year ending the 31st March, 1906, were as under : Steamers, 678, 278,605 tons ; sailing-vessels, 35, 5,353 tons ; total tons, 283,958

I have, &c.,

JAMES ISDELL,

Inspector of Factories.

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

ASHBURTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Ashburton, 6th April, 1906.

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

FACTORIES.

During the year just passed there were 130 factories registered, employing 689 males and 142 females. This is an increase of 12 factories over last year.

Trade on the whole in this town has been of a very uncertain character, and more especially I might mention saddlers, tinsmiths, wheelwrights, and engineers.

The building trade, as I have mentioned in my monthly reports for the last few months, has not been so busy in the town, but fortunately there is some country work on hand which will keep hands busy for a time.

The woollen-factory still keeps fairly busy, and has worked a little overtime during the year, but the number of employees is not so large, and is composed of a number of young persons where practicable.

The freezing-works also have not been employing so many hands ; in 1904 the number was 235, in 1905 it was 199, showing a decrease of 36. It is true they have lately imported some thirty or forty butchers from Australia, but, from what I can gather on inquiries made, there was no real necessity for this to be done, except that when there was a large number of sheep forwarded they would have plenty of men to put them through quickly.

The retail trade during the year has been of a very intermittent and, on the whole, not very satisfactory character ; many of the shopkeepers complain that the business done is below the average. It is no doubt true in many cases, and caused by keen competition, both in and outside the town, and also by the many auction-sales that take place here ; again, as last year, we may also blame the weather, which has been very inclement, and has done much damage and interfered with business very materially.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACTS.

I have little to report on these, as they are well observed and carried out, both in the hours worked, the statutory half-holiday, and with regard to females not working after 9 o'clock on the late night (Saturday.)