

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

I can only repeat what I reported last year, that this Act is working as well as can possibly be expected, and although I was compelled to bring some thirty employers before the Arbitration Court, employers will no doubt make themselves more conversant with the agreement or award by which they are bound, consequently there should be less friction as time goes on.

UNSKILLED LABOUR.

During the year just ended 122 men found employment on Government and private works through this office.

Timaru and all South Canterbury have enjoyed a very prosperous year in all branches of trades, and especially in the building trades.

I am pleased to report that the two local freezing-works are very much busier than in former years, and at the present time they have the greatest difficulty in procuring sufficient labour to cope with the great amount of sheep coming forward. With the new drainage-works likely to be put in hand shortly, the prospects for the ensuing year are exceedingly bright and encouraging.

In conclusion, I have to express sincere thanks to both employers and employees alike for the courtesy and kindness I have invariably received at their hands in carrying out what may be termed arduous and multifarious duties.

I have, &c.,

P. KEDDIE,

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

Inspector of Factories.

OAMARU.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Oamaru, 7th April, 1906.

I have the honour to submit for your information my report upon the working of the various Acts under my supervision for the year ending the 31st March, 1906.

I am glad to be able to report that the period just ended has been most satisfactory to all concerned. I found factory-owners anxious to keep their workrooms clean, well ventilated, and comfortable for employees, whose interest, I am pleased to say, they have carefully considered. The sanitary conditions have been well attended to.

The number of factories in the district for the year was sixty-nine. The number of persons employed was 459 males and 234 females; total, 693. The amount of overtime worked, principally by tailors and dressmakers, was—females 2,345 and males 2,144 hours, a total of 4,489 hours.

The year has been a good one for all trades, except engineers, who have not been fully employed a good part of the time. Tailors, dressmakers, stonemasons, and carpenters have been very busy.

I have had little or no trouble in carrying out the provisions of this Act. Some little bother certainly does occasionally arise from the fact that employers have not hitherto kept the dates when employees entered their service; and, though I am of opinion with no intention of evading the law or defrauding the worker, have in a few instances failed to increase the wage at the proper time. But in all cases the arrears of wages have been at once made good. I hope this trouble will not again occur, now that employers have been supplied with factory registers in which to enter the names and dates of employment.

The Woollen Company has added to its premises a large room now used as a worsted-mill, with new machinery. This and the other buildings in use as workrooms are well ventilated and clean.

I have issued permits to four males and nine females under sixteen to work in factories.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The provisions of this Act are now fairly known to all concerned, both employers and employees, and I have had no difficulty in carrying it out.

I issued permits under this Act to six males and thirteen females, principally for stocktaking. The males worked thirty-four hours and the females fifty-two hours.

All shops have been regularly closed on the half-holiday.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

I have issued four licenses under this Act, and I have had no complaints against the licensees, who comply with the law on the subject.

SHEARING-SHEDS.

I inspected four sheds in my district during shearing-time, and found everything satisfactory. No complaints from the men as to accommodation, &c.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

I have given this Act a good deal of attention, but found a little trouble with respect to the tailoresses' award, a copy of which I only recently received. I have, however, now mastered it, having fully gone into the matter, and in company with Inspector Hally, of Dunedin, visited the various firms affected by the award. I was pleased to find that the provisions of the award, except in a few instances, were fairly observed.