

During the year 213 factories have been registered, employing 1,107 males and 214 females, a total of 1,321.

Overtime warrants were granted to 162 employees, who worked 2,712 hours.

Permits to young persons were issued during the year to 30 people—viz., 12 boys and 18 girls. Of the former, 4 had passed Standard IV, 3 Standard V, 3 Standard VI, and 2 Standard VII. Of the girls, 3 had passed Standard IV, 9 Standard V, 5 Standard VI, and 1 Standard VII.

Fourteen accidents were reported during the year, of which none were fatal. The most serious was one where concussion of the brain was caused by a man's falling through a hatchway from an upper to a lower room.

One factory-owner was fined for not reporting an accident.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

Overtime warrants were issued to 95 persons, who worked 825 hours.

Four shopkeepers were prosecuted on six charges of having employed their assistants beyond the hour prescribed without permits. Five were convicted and fined, and one case was dismissed, the Magistrate holding that the person cited was not at the time the occupier within the meaning of the Act.

Re closing: A large number of the business people here are in favour of a uniform hour of closing being fixed. Those who employ assistants and run a large business are compelled to close at schedule time for assistants, and they complain of the number of Chinese and others who are in competition with them keeping open. I am of opinion that compulsory closing at a uniform hour would meet with the approval of the majority of those engaged in the retail trades here.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES.

Five certificates have been issued during the year, and there are at present four registry offices doing business. All are well conducted, and the law *re fees* is observed.

In conclusion I desire to thank all those whom I meet in the execution of my duties for the invariable courtesy extended to me.

I have, &c.,

J. HOLLOWES,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wanganui, 15th April, 1907.

I have the honour to submit herewith my annual report for the period ending the 31st March, 1907.

The period under review has from an industrial point of view been one of general prosperity. Steady and marked progress has been made, substantial buildings have been erected in the town and suburbs, and a vast area of bush land has been taken up by selectors which is now being felled. The progress being made by the settlers in the backblocks must eventually add materially to the volume of trade in the town, and it is safe to predict a bright and prosperous future for Wanganui.

FACTORIES ACT.

It is my pleasant duty to again have to place on record a total absence of friction experienced in the administration of this Act. One hundred and seventy-five factories were registered during the year, showing an increase of 15 over the preceding period. 1,234 persons were employed therein—979 males and 255 females. The number of workers employed shows a decrease of 25 on the corresponding period last year. This is undoubtedly owing to the fact that the Aramoho Meat-freezing Company has been absorbed by the Wanganui Meat-freezing Company, and the bulk of the work has been transferred to the Wanganui Meat Company's works at Castlecliff, where it can be put through more economically and expeditiously.

Overtime warrants were issued to 26 employers to work 152 women and boys 2,176 hours.

Certificates of fitness were issued to 5 boys and 10 girls.

Twenty-four accidents were reported. None were fatal, and in each case the conditions of the Act were complied with.

There were 10 prosecutions for breaches of this Act. Convictions were recorded and penalties inflicted in each case. (Reports of eight of these will appear in the next annual report.)

Sections 40 and 41 of the Factories Act are strictly observed. Factories are kept in a cleanly state, and efficient fire-escapes are provided where needed.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

This Act has not worked so smoothly. The local grocers and storekeepers, in accordance with section 21, fixed the closing-hour at 9 p.m. on Saturdays, and after the new closing-hours had been gazetted a number of them failed to observe its provisions. This led to six prosecutions, and penalties were inflicted in each case.

Six tobacconists were prosecuted for failing to close their shops at 1 p.m. on the statutory half-holiday for the remainder of the day. In each case they closed at 1 p.m., and opened after 6 p.m. on race night. Convictions and fines were obtained in each case. One shopkeeper was convicted, fined,