

and ordered to pay back-wages, he having deducted wages because his assistant had blundered in giving too much change to a customer. (Reports of these cases will appear in the next annual report.)

There are 115 shopkeepers in this district, giving employment to 252 males and 192 females.

Overtime: Thirteen employers worked 48 males and 39 females 1,676 hours, for which overtime-rate was paid.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Nine offices are at present carrying on business, and they are all conducted satisfactorily.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

It is satisfactory to have to report that generally speaking the privilege of working under an award is appreciated both by employers and workers, the former because it equalises the conditions in the cost of production and tends to prevent cutting in prices, the latter because they know they are getting the current market value for their labour.

There were seven convictions under this Act. A number of cases for breach of the preference clause in the drivers' award were withdrawn, owing to the neglect of the union to keep their employment-book in terms required by the award.

LABOUR.

All classes of workers have had a good year. Competent tradesmen in the building trades were in steady demand all the year round.

In addition to men of our own colony, many arrivals from the Commonwealth and Great Britain have been assisted to employment by the Department through this office.

Skilled agricultural labourers have been eagerly inquired for, and men able to tackle ploughing, fencing, milking, or shepherding have found employment, and have every reason to be satisfied with their prospects.

The generous terms offered by dairy-factory companies to people anxious to embark in the dairy-industry enables men with very limited capital to start in business for themselves. The first step usually taken in this direction is to milk on shares for one or two seasons, and when a suitable farm becomes vacant to apply to the dairy company with whom they have been dealing for financial assistance, which is invariably given.

Letters come to hand occasionally from people who have been assisted by the Department through this office, conveying information as to their welfare, and expressing appreciation of treatment received.

I have again to thank all those with whom I come in contact in my official capacity for the invariable courtesy with which I have been treated.

I have, &c.,

W. H. MCQUARTERS,
Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

HAWERA.

SIR,—

Hawera, 31st March, 1907.

I have the honour to submit my annual report upon the working of the Factories and Shops and Offices Acts during the year ending the 31st March, 1907.

There were 102 factories registered, employing 323 males and 69 females, as against 100 factories registered the previous year, employing 307 males and 54 females. There were 76 shops registered. The building trade is fairly brisk. Two of the sash and door factories have been working overtime manufacturing woodware. Unskilled labour has been in great demand for harvesting, but could not be obtained. Milkers also were in great demand, but could not be got. Several milking-machines have been erected to get over this difficulty, and have proved a great success. There have been four accidents in factories during the year, but none of a serious nature. There have been two prosecutions for infringements of the Shops and Offices Act, fines being inflicted in each case; otherwise the various Acts have been working satisfactorily.

I have, &c.,

J. S. BERNARD,
Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, New Plymouth, 10th April, 1907.

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

GENERAL.

It is pleasing to report that the year just ended has been the most prosperous experienced for many years, owing to the substantial increase and the high prices obtained for our staple products—viz., butter and cheese. The increase is mainly due to an early spring and exceptional seasonable weather, the result being an abundance of feed which enabled farmers in many cases to increase the number of cows, and prices obtained have been 15 per cent. higher than previous years. To illustrate this, as an instance, one company in this district, the Taranaki Producers' Freezing-works, have put through this year 12,000 boxes more than last, valued at £30,000, and 5,000 cases of cheese valued at £19,000.