

As regards the retail trade a good year has been experienced, and in the manufacturing trades the number of factories and persons employed have increased, and good time has been worked throughout.

FACTORIES ACT.

The provisions of this Act have again worked smoothly, and generally speaking employers have willingly complied with any improvement which I have considered to be necessary as regarded the internal or sanitary arrangements of their factory premises. There have been several up-to-date factories erected. In visiting the various factories I found several cases of girls being paid less than provided by the Act, but they were only of a slight nature, and were remedied by the payment of the back wages. Female employees are very careless *re* obtaining the certificates showing period of employment, as provided by the amendment of 1905, and so lose the benefit of the Act.

The number of factories registered during the year was 122, employing 530 males and 98 females, making a total of 628 employees. This is an increase of 12 factories and 58 employees.

CERTIFICATES OF FITNESS.

Certificates have been issued to 8 boys and 3 girls under sixteen years of age.

OVERTIME.

Overtime has been worked as follows: 42 women and boys under sixteen years worked 1,158 hours, and 110 adult males worked 6,678 hours.

ACCIDENTS.

A number of slight accidents have been reported, and where possible instructions given to fix guards on machinery.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

A good deal of work is necessary *in re* the administration of this Act. This is, in a measure, due to the trouble caused in finding employers in the country districts. The awards in the Wairarapa district are fairly well observed. Applications for enforcement have been made in 15 cases, and 14 employers were fined and 1 case dismissed. The trades affected were bakers, carpenters, painters, and furniture-makers. A large number of alleged breaches were inquired into in other trades. These were adjusted without any prosecution.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

This Act has worked fairly well. There have been four prosecutions. A dairyman was charged with failing to pay the minimum rate of wages to a boy employed on a milk-round. The boy received 2s. 6d. per week, and was engaged at delivering milk out of school hours. Counsel for defendant contended that the owner of a milk-round was not an occupier of a shop within the meaning of the Act, and therefore the boy was not a "shop-assistant." The Magistrate, however, ruled otherwise, and convicted and fined defendant. Other cases were for employing assistants in a shop without permit, auctioneers employing assistant at sales at private houses on day of statutory half-holiday, and a clothier for failing to close shop in terms of requisition under section 21. In each case a conviction was obtained, and a fine inflicted. In the other case a shopkeeper was fined for not closing in accordance with a gazetted requisition.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are 6 offices doing business in Masterton. I have inspected their books, and found them all well kept, and the law observed. The complaint as made last year still obtains—that advertisements for men wanted are kept in the newspaper for some time after the situations are filled, and as a result men are brought, in some instances for long distances, on a wild-goose chase.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

I have visited the various shearing-sheds in the Masterton and Carterton districts, and in the majority of cases the conditions were fairly satisfactory. Notice has been given in one case to erect accommodation, and in several others to effect improvements.

LABOUR.

For the greater part of the year work has been fairly plentiful, and as the weather throughout the spring and summer has been good the outdoor workers have had a much better time than they experienced last year. All able-bodied labourers have found employment without much difficulty.

Ninety-two men have applied at this office for employment, of whom 55 have been sent to Government and private work.

In conclusion I am pleased to say that my relations during the year with employers and others have been of an amicable nature, and without the slightest friction.

I have, &c.,

GODWIN E. A. HOOD,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.