

TIMARU.

SIR,—

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

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

FACTORIES.

I am very pleased to report that the year just ended has been a most gratifying and prosperous one. Business in almost every branch of trade has been remarkably good. I stated in my last annual report that a drainage scheme was being inaugurated. It now gives me great satisfaction to state that this scheme has been passed by the ratepayers, and is now in hand, so by this time next year I hope to be able to say that every factory in the town is connected by underground drainage, which will be the means of securing a much more healthy condition of sanitation than exists at the present time.

There were 234 factories. The number of persons employed was 1,216—viz., 907 males and 309 females.

OVERTIME.

The amount of overtime worked in factories during the year was—males 12,179 hours, and females 6,623 hours, making a total of 18,802 hours.

I have to report that the shipping at this port has again proved a record year, as the following returns will show: Wool, 42,398 bales; frozen mutton, 799,582 carcasses; wheat, 186,790 sacks; oatmeal, 3,265 sacks; bran and sharps, 66,086 sacks; potatoes, 7,553 sacks; tallow, 2,682 tons; preserved meats, 2,234 cases; poultry, 10 cases; general merchandise, 17,390 tons; total exports, 78,509 tons; imports, 77,959 tons: making a grand total of 156,468 tons.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

I have nothing specially to report in regard to this Act. Everything has been working very smoothly, the half-holiday being faithfully observed, and especially in regard to females and boys finishing work punctually at 9 p.m. on Saturday. I had one appeal case during the year against the South Canterbury Dairy Company for not allowing their office-assistants the weekly half-holiday. The Supreme Court held that dairy companies do not come under, and are exempt from, these Acts.

The overtime worked in shops and offices during the year was—84 males, 1,652½ hours; and 55 females, 678½ hours: making a total of 2,331 hours.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES.

These offices have been reduced to 3, and they appear to be well conducted. I have not had a single complaint during the year.

ACCIDENTS.

There were 10 accidents reported during the year, none of which were of a serious nature.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

This Act is working much more smoothly than it did previously. Employers have evidently studied the Act more carefully, and find it to their interest and advantage to work up to their respective awards.

The only disturbing element in connection with this Act during the year was the strike of slaughtermen and their assistants at Smithfield and Pareora Freezing-works, which caused a bit of bad feeling to exist while it lasted, but I am pleased to report it did not last very long, and all are again working harmoniously together.

UNSKILLED LABOUR.

This branch of the Department's work has not caused any anxiety. During the year 88 men with 55 persons dependant on them have been sent to work, many of them placed privately. As anticipated last year, South Canterbury has enjoyed another very prosperous year; and now that the drainage scheme has started, all local men will be fully employed during the coming year.

SHEARING-SHEDS.

As anticipated last year, the shearing-sheds in the country districts are, with one exception, in first-class order; during the past year several sheds have been rebuilt, while others have been thoroughly renovated and brought up to the required standard. I had occasion to bring one of the largest station-managers before the Court at Kurow for refusing to comply with the local Inspector's instructions, with the result that the Magistrate ordered him to have the several huts renovated and partly renewed, the work to be done to the entire satisfaction of the local Inspector by the 30th September, 1907, under a penalty of £25 and £2 for every day unfinished after that date.

In concluding my report, I have to thank all employers and others for the courtesy shown me, and especially have I to thank the Health and Borough Inspectors for the trouble they have taken in assisting me in carrying out my duties during the year.

I have, &c.,

P. KEDDIE,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.