

plaints have been obviated, and disputes have been arranged without reference to either Board or Court.

Although the number of complaints of all classes during the year has been fairly large, and necessarily there has been much time devoted to the investigation of these cases, yet the number of items brought before the Court of Arbitration was comparatively small, our experience being that not only are pronounced breaches gradually becoming rare, but they are also more difficult to prove in a satisfactory manner.

Another feature in connection with the administration of this Act is that, where the union of workers has the support of those employed in the industry and the members take an active part in its affairs, it is much easier to carry out the provisions of an award or agreement, and with better results to employers and workers, than when we are compelled to deal with disorganized non-unionists.

The number of cases dealt with by the Court was 109. Of these, 83 were decided in favour of the Department, 15 dismissed, and 11 withdrawn.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I have only to add that the thanks of the Department are due to those associated with me in this office. All have endeavoured to carry out the various duties appertaining to its business in a practical and praiseworthy manner, and personally I fully appreciate the valuable assistance they have accorded me in the administration of the various laws and regulations under the control of the Department in this district.

I have, &c.,

P. HALLY,

The Chief Inspector of Factories Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.

WHANGAREI.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Whangarei, 16th April, 1908.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for your information.

I beg to report having registered 69 factories, in which 315 persons are employed—viz., 248 males and 67 females.

Certificates of fitness to work in factories were issued to 16 persons under sixteen years of age—viz., 9 males and 7 females.

One accident was reported during the year.

There were 3 prosecutions for breaches of the Act, convictions being obtained in 2 cases, and 1 case withdrawn.

Twenty-four persons worked overtime; the number of hours worked being 489.

I have also registered 70 shops, in which 160 persons are employed—viz., 117 males and 43 females.

There were 7 prosecutions for breaches of the Act, resulting in 6 convictions, and 1 case being dismissed—viz., that of an auctioneer selling goods by auction on the show-grounds on a statutory half-holiday. He was, however, convicted and fined for employing an assistant, who was holding up goods offered for sale.

Forty-eight persons worked overtime in the various shops, the number of hours being 560.

The business people report having had a prosperous year, all factories being fully employed, and working full time. Some of the flax-mills have closed down, but the men have found no difficulty in obtaining employment elsewhere.

The building trade has been very busy during the year; several substantial brick buildings have been erected, and others are now being built.

There has been a good demand for unskilled labour; all local men being fully employed.

I have had several applications from employers to obtain men for them to do odd jobs, but I could not get them.

The Portland Cement Company, Limestone Island, are working full time; they employ about 70 men, the work being done in shifts of eight hours each.

Owing to the fall in the price of gum, a number of the younger men are leaving the gumfields and obtaining employment elsewhere.

A large number of Austrians and elderly men are still on the gumfields, and it is said that they are doing very well.

I have, &c.,

THOS. J. DRAKE,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.

GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Gisborne, 8th April, 1908.

I have the honour to submit, for your consideration, the annual report of matters coming within the jurisdiction of the Gisborne branch of the Department of Labour for the year ending 31st March, 1908.

GENERAL.

It is pleasing to report that the year just ended has been the most prosperous experienced for many years; evidence of this is to be found in the increased number of buildings erected. Building permits have been granted by the Borough Council to the value of £85,000, as against £65,000, the previous year. Then we have the overtime worked in factories and shops, which is more than doubled this year.