

in quest of work. However, many struck out for the country on their own account, and others were assisted by the Government to railway, road, and bush work. The depression was not of long duration in this district, and during the past few months we have had the average number of callers. During the year 441 names of applicants have been entered in the books of the Department, and of this number 146 were assisted either to private employment or Government works.

FACTORIES ACT.

I have had very little trouble with the administration of this Act during the year, and have found factory-occupiers willing to make any necessary improvements, and the workrooms generally are sanitary, well ventilated, and cleanly kept.

During the year 247 certificates of registration were issued, as against 235 of the previous year; but the number of persons employed shows a decrease on the previous year, the figures being 1,160 males and 330 females, as against 1,241 males and 338 females. The decrease is mostly accounted for by the slackness in the building trades in the early part of the year, several of the larger firms having found it necessary to considerably reduce the number of factory hands employed.

Certificates of fitness to work in factories were issued to 49 young persons—31 males and 18 females.

Overtime shows a decrease in both the number of workers and the hours worked—viz., 150 boys under sixteen and females worked 2,076 hours, as compared with 181 persons who last year worked 2,966 hours

Accidents.—Thirty-four accidents were reported, 8 of which were serious but none fatal. The other 26 accidents were of a less serious nature.

Prosecutions.—A Chinese was prosecuted for failing to pay wages to an assistant, and for not keeping proper records, but at the hearing he produced a deed of partnership which had been drawn up after the information was laid, and the S.M. dismissed the informations.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

This Act has been fairly well observed during the year. A number of shopkeepers in this district were under the impression that they could work their assistants (drivers delivering goods, &c.) longer hours than section 6 of the Act provides. It was necessary to take a case into Court, and a number of other shopkeepers received letters of warning. This had the desired effect, and the Act is now fairly well observed.

Several trades have taken advantage of section 25 of the Act by which a majority of the shopkeepers can fix their own closing-hours, and the "requisitions" have been well observed, although considerable discontent was expressed at the beginning by the smaller tradespeople, who comprised the minority. I think subsection 8 of section 25 of the Act should be amended so as to make it illegal for a shopkeeper to sell any line governed by a "requisition" after the shops of that particular trade are closed in accordance with a "requisition."

There were 234 shops registered, as compared with 226 during the previous year; and 212 shop-assistants worked 2,700 hours' overtime.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

This Act has been well observed, and very few complaints have been received. There are 6 registry offices registered in this district.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

I have not had any great difficulty in the administration of this Act, the complaints received have generally been of a minor nature, and the breaches committed have been due to carelessness on the part of the employer in not studying the award under which he is working.

As my jurisdiction now extends to beyond Ohakune, it has been necessary to pay several visits to the Rangitikei district during the year, more especially in regard to the sawmilling industry, which is governed by the Wellington award, and generally speaking I have found the award has been well obeyed.

A number of employees lost a considerable portion of their wages through allowing them to accumulate, and only reporting the matter after the firms had either disposed of their interest or became bankrupt. However, the Department took immediate action, and assisted the men to recover about two-thirds of the money due to them. These cases should prove an object-lesson to employees in factories not to allow their wages to accumulate beyond the time allowed by section 32 of the Factories Act.

Fifteen prosecution cases were taken, out of which there were 13 convictions obtained, and 2 cases were withdrawn.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

Visits of inspection were paid to a number of stations, and several places were found to be not up to the standard required by the Act. In these cases notices have been served on the owners to either rebuild or make substantial improvements before next shearing.

In conclusion, I have to again record my appreciation of the courteous treatment I have received from all I have come in contact with in the execution of my duty.

I have, &c.,

D. CARMODY,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.