

and the employer nothing at all, and I am of opinion that some further steps should be taken to make this state of things impossible.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

This Act is also working very well, and nothing of very great importance has occurred during my term in this office. There seems to be above the average of good feeling existing between employers and employees, and I have found the unions, through their secretaries, to be very amenable to reason, and they have given me every assistance in carrying out my duties on their behalf.

One prosecution was taken for a breach of this Act (failing to keep time and wages book), and a fine was inflicted.

Twenty-nine cases for enforcement of awards have been taken under this Act before the Stipendiary Magistrates; convictions have been secured in 17 of these, and the penalties have all been paid. One case was taken involving interpretation, and on the Magistrate referring it to the Arbitration Court, judgment was given for the defendant on that Court's decision. Three cases were withdrawn and 8 were dismissed, and in 3 of these cases appeals are pending. (For particulars of these cases, please see the annual Books of Awards.)

I would like to add, with regard to the breaches of awards that have occurred in this district, that in most cases they have occurred through carelessness or oversight rather than through wilfulness.

In the matter of appeals from Magistrates' decision to the Arbitration Court, I would strongly urge that provision be made for simplifying the procedure, and that legal formalities be dispensed with as much as possible, so that an Inspector can take a case through without fear of technicalities putting him out of Court, as long as he complies with such regulations as might be made.

SHEARERS' AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

This Act is working very smoothly now, as far as the shearers are concerned, and most stations have well-appointed accommodation for the shearers, although there is a strong feeling amongst the men that a fireplace should be provided in at least one room to enable them to dry their clothing, particularly in wet weather; on some stations fireplaces are provided, but, as it is not compulsory, a good many places have not this convenience.

With regard to the portion of the Act relating to the agricultural labourers I reported one place that was brought under my notice, and which was very unsatisfactory indeed, to the Health Department, and the accommodation provided was subsequently condemned by the Health Officer.

I would recommend that it be provided in the regulations that no one be allowed to sleep in the galley connected with a threshing-mill camp. At the present time it is a general thing for from three to five men to sleep in a compartment about 16 ft. by 8 ft. by 7 ft., in which food is prepared for and eaten by ten men, and I submit that this is a state of things that should not be allowed.

MEN'S EMPLOYMENT BRANCH.

This branch of the Department's work does not receive the support of employers that it should, and it is very seldom that employers apply here for men. Perhaps, in a measure, this is to be accounted for by the fact that a registry-office has been started in connection with the local branches of the Farmers' Union, and it is working very well, and only a nominal fee is charged.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I have to tender my thanks to the secretaries of unions (of both employers and employees) for their cordial assistance, and also to employers and employees throughout South Canterbury and Ashburton, for the courtesy shown me, and their readiness to comply with my requirements.

I also wish to express my gratitude for the kindness and help of my predecessor, the late Mr. P. Keddie, during the short period between his leaving the Department's service and his death.

GEO. H. LIGHTFOOT,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.

INVERCARGILL.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Invercargill, 25th April, 1910.

I have the honour to submit, for your consideration, my annual report on the working of the Invercargill branch of the Department of Labour for the year ending 31st March, 1910.

GENERAL.

The dairy industry: I believe I am safe in saying that no other individual industry has made such rapid strides during the year as the dairy industry. This is, undoubtedly, one of Southland's leading industries, and as a cheese-producer the province is the foremost in the Dominion. New factories have sprung up in all directions, and, encouraged by the success of those already in the field, settlers in all parts are turning their attention to the possibilities of the dairy industry in their own districts,