

endeavouring to have necessary work put in hand at a time when employment was most urgently needed. Married men with families were given the preference of local work, and also of any Government co-operative work which was available. Local bodies were not in a position to employ any number of men, and a very small percentage of those looking for work were placed in employment through that source. The completion of the Waiau and the Switzers railway-works threw a number of men out, who, in the majority of cases, found their way into the town, and assisted to swell the already heavy list.

Private employment was found for 98 men, and 67 were sent to Government co-operative works. Of these, 63 were single men, with 22 persons depending on them, and 86 married, with 235 dependents. Every credit is due to the men for the philosophical manner in which they faced the difficulty. As was natural to expect, there were those who were dissatisfied with the system of selection, which, when necessity arose, was by ballot, but, taken all round, there was an absence of anything in the nature of ill feeling or attempts to override the decisions arrived at.

Farm labourers were in keen demand throughout the whole year, but the number of suitable men offering their services was never anything like sufficient to meet the demand, and many farmers were forced to take on learners to assist in getting their ploughing through in time for the spring sowing. First-class farm hands are still not too plentiful. There seems to be a feeling existing among young men that farm-life is all drudgery; but, figured out at the end of the year, the farm labourer receiving £1 5s. or £1 7s. 6d. per week constant is better off than the one depending on odd jobs at current rates as a means of sustenance.

FACTORIES ACT.

The number of factories registered during the year was 353, an increase of 38 over last year's figures.

The number of persons employed in the different industries was 2,500.

Certificates of fitness for young persons to work in factories were issued to 22 boys and 10 girls.

Overtime.—The amount of overtime worked in factories by boys under sixteen and females was 8,781 hours.

Accidents.—Twenty-four accidents were reported and inquired into during the year. None of these were of a very serious nature, consisting chiefly of broken limbs, cuts, and bruises.

Half-holiday.—There has been very little cause for complaint against employers for failure to observe the weekly half-holiday. The general feeling existing is that the employer appreciates the half-holiday as much as the employee, and only on very rare occasions has any one been found in a workroom a quarter of an hour after closing-time. It has not been necessary to take action against any employer for breach of this clause of the Factories Act.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

Under this Act everything has worked satisfactorily. The several early-closing "requisitions" in force have been rigorously adhered to. In fact, during the winter months certain shopkeepers close their places from half an hour to an hour before the necessary time.

The amalgamation of the Boroughs of Invercargill, Avenal, Gladstone, and North and East Invercargill was effected early in the year 1910. After amalgamation, the Borough Council took steps to bring all shopkeepers in the combined boroughs into line in the matter of early closing. An officer of the Council waited on all retailers resident in the old boroughs for the purpose of ascertaining their views, with the result that every shopkeeper affected by "requisition" in force in the main borough signed a requisition asking the Council to fix the closing-hours in accordance with "requisitions" in force.

There were not any prosecutions under the Shops and Offices Act.

Returns were collected from 305 shops.

Overtime worked by shop-assistants totalled 2,109 hours, an increase of 638 hours over last year.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

An endeavour to visit every industry working under an award of the Arbitration Court was only partly successful. A great deal of this work can be undertaken only in the summer months, on account of bad roads and other disadvantages of travel. The whole of the district has been mapped out in blocks, and will be visited as opportunity occurs.

During the year there were 13 prosecutions for breaches of awards. In 12 cases penalties and cost were imposed, and 1 case was dismissed. The penalties inflicted amounted to £10 5s. 6d.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are 7 persons holding registry-office certificates in Invercargill. The requirements of the Act have been well carried out in each instance.

CASES SETTLED OUT OF COURT.

During the year the amount collected by this office on account of back wages totalled £42 19s. 8d. covering breaches of the Butchers', Sawmillers', Typographers', and Shearers' awards.

I have, &c.,

H. B. BOWER,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories,