

To the different Ministers of the Crown who have directed the Department, to my brother-officers of the Civil Service, to my many kind and distinguished correspondents in foreign lands, to the industrial unions of employers and workers, to the workers generally, and to the public Press I offer the expression of my very sincere gratitude. However much I may have differed from some of these in regard to economic questions or to details of business, I have received from each of them individually great kindness and lenient judgment.

For myself, I can only say that I have tried to do my work faithfully.

EDWARD TREGGAR.

Secretary for Labour and Registrar of Industrial Unions.

THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES to the Hon. the MINISTER OF LABOUR.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 20th April, 1910.

I have the honour to place before you my report on the work of the Department that comes under my supervision and direction.

The inward and outward correspondence of the Department continues to grow. During the year 14,321 letters were despatched, 13,150 letters were received, 1,294 telegrams were sent from the Department, and 990 received. In addition to these totals, over 20,000 circulars and circular letters were issued. Much of the correspondence entails a good deal of research in respect to the rulings of the Civil and Arbitration Courts, and the interpretations given under labour legislation. The various notices to occupiers of factories and shops and under the Scaffolding Inspection Act, awards, and industrial agreements are not included in the above totals. During the year these notices totalled many thousands.

THE FACTORIES ACT.

This enactment is perhaps the most easily administered of all the statutes that come within the Department's jurisdiction. Its provisions are now well known, and are fairly easy of comprehension by all who come under its scope. The wide circulation of extracts from this Act and the legal necessity for posting notices in all workrooms have contributed to this result. The only serious difficulty is the one affecting industries in borough and town districts where a poll has been taken under section 36 of the Act fixing the statutory half-holiday under the Act on the same day as the day appointed for the statutory closing-day for shops. Undoubtedly this provision has been a very great convenience to factory-occupiers who are obliged to carry on manufacturing operations in the premises where their retail businesses are carried on, thus enabling them to close their factories and shops on the same day. With respect to industries, however, which are confined to manufacturing, it would be wise, I submit, to make provision similar to that in section 11 (2)—last paragraph—of the Shops and Offices Act, 1908, which enacts that in the event of any day other than Saturday being appointed as the statutory closing-day, then any employer would be entitled to close his shop on Saturday on giving notice to the Inspector. This, in my opinion, would meet the case without in any way interfering with the factories that close on the statutory half-holiday for shops.

Quite a number of new and up-to-date factories have been erected in different parts of the Dominion during the year, in which many sanitary and other improvements have been effected. It will be seen from the Inspector's reports that a very thorough and complete inspection has been made of the various factories and workrooms during the period covered by this report, and any irregularities that were found have been rectified.

A thorough system of inspection has been carried out in the various districts in New Zealand. The inspection has dealt not only with the condition of factory premises, observance of hours, &c., but also the books bearing on wages and overtime have been closely scrutinised.

The demand for women and girl workers in woollen-mills, boot and shoe factories, clothing factories, and laundries has been as pressing as ever, and representations have been made to the Department's officers to promote the immigration of girls towards filling the demand. Some manufacturers have even gone further, and placed advertisements in the English papers in order to try and get some of the vacancies filled. It will also be seen from the return published elsewhere that a great deal of overtime has been worked in many of the industries that come under review.