

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 16th April, 1910.

I have the honour to submit the following report of work done by me during the year ending the 31st March, 1910, concerning women employed in factories, &c. :—

Factories Act.

During that period I have visited factories and workrooms in various parts of the Dominion where women are employed, and am pleased to state that I found them generally in a satisfactory condition. The granting of certificates of fitness to young girls has been carefully looked after. Permits for overtime, payment for overtime, and conditions under which such overtime has been worked are other matters to which great attention has been given.

The various increases of wages due to persons under twenty years of age are now so thoroughly understood by employers that only in isolated instances does an Inspector find a default.

In each factory visited the greatest care has been taken to see that the employees therein are not in any way suffering from any malignant or harmful disease, and in very few instances has the attention of the Health Officers had to be called to any features of risk in this respect. I am glad to be able to state that the women employed in the factories of the Dominion seem generally to be a sound, healthy body of workers.

Awards (Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act).

When visiting factories, special attention has been given to trades coming under awards of the Arbitration Court. In all such trades where regulation wages are in force there has not been much difficulty in getting employers to observe the various provisions.

A very important award is that which includes hotels, restaurants, and tea-rooms. A great deal of inspection has been done under these provisions in each of the four large centres, such as seeing that workers are in receipt of the rate of wages provided under the award. In this direction a number of adjustments have taken place. In some cases where there was default I believe it to have been unintentional on the part of the employer—although, no doubt, he should have made himself conversant with the requirements. The hours worked by those employed under this award have been carefully checked, and where overtime has been worked the proper payment for such overtime has been investigated.

Considerable trouble has been taken in respect to the sleeping-accommodation provided for under these awards, and has resulted in improved conditions in many cases.

The wages and time book, which is now compulsory under all awards, is of great advantage in seeing that the provisions of awards are complied with. This book shows the full wages of workers, and the daily and weekly hours; generally also, employers insist on the employees signing the book each week.

I should mention here that when visiting restaurants and tea-rooms the health of both the employer and employee has been carefully looked to, and where any sign of unhealthiness has been discerned the Health Officers have at once been acquainted with the fact. Most of the premises are clean and well conducted, but there are still many which one would wish to see cleaner and better conducted. However, the Health Department is doing much in the direction of having these places improved.

Shops and Offices Act.

As far as women are concerned, I may say that this Act appears to have worked well throughout the year. A systematic inspection of shops has been made, and so far as hours and wages of assistants are concerned the law has been found to be generally well observed, the wages of young assistants being usually much in advance of the rates specified by the Act.

The ventilation and cleanliness of shops has been carefully looked after, also sitting-accommodation for women.

Servants' Registry Offices Act.

During the course of my visits of inspection of factories and shops I have paid attention also to the observance of this Act, and have found very few complaints as to excessive fees, &c.

I have, &c.,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

M. HAWTHORNE,
Inspector of Factories.

Christchurch.

SIR,—

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

I herewith submit my report on the work of the Department in the Christchurch district for the year ending the 31st March, 1910.

The year just ended has been a rather notable one, in that it opened with a very serious depression in trade, a tightness of money, and a consequent outcry of unemployment. No doubt the general depression was due to influences beyond the control of our own manufacturers and producers. Fortunately the harvest had been a bountiful one, although the prices for certain cereals were rather low. The prices of wool were also very satisfactory, and this also assisted materially in the recovery from the depression, by putting into circulation large sums that would not in an ordinary season be available. About the end of September nearly all traces of the depression were gone. Money was more plentiful and advances were being made more freely by banks and other financial institutions, enabling large