

A number of complaints was settled without recourse to the Court, letters of warning being deemed sufficient to ensure compliance with the Act.

A complete inspection of all the shops has not been effected this year, owing to pressure of business in other departments.

Complaints have come to hand during the year as to the allegedly long hours worked by office employees in some of the large stores that come within the exemption clause of section 27. I think provision ought to be made in this section fixing the hours of employment in all these offices, and providing for overtime rates.

The total amount of overtime worked in the various shops by 124 males and 59 females was 3,288 hours.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

Owing to the number of new awards coming into operation this year, a considerable amount of time has been devoted to the parties cited in order to assist them to comply with the working-conditions of the awards.

Legal proceedings have been instituted in 30 cases for breaches of awards; 3 cases were dismissed, in 3 the Department was nonsuited, and in 24 cases fines were imposed, totalling £34 10s., and costs £6 15s. 6d. Costs against the Department amounted to £2 12s. Fourteen cases were heard in Napier, 12 in Hastings, 2 in Waipawa, 1 in Ormondville, and 1 in Dannevirke.

Arrears of wages were recovered for workers, under various awards, to the amount of £30 17s. 8d.

The following list shows the number of lads that have been apprenticed to the various trades throughout the year: Engineering, 13; blacksmithing and coachbuilding, 4; tailoring, 3; cabinetmaking and upholstering, 3; moulding, 1; boilermaking, 1; painting, 1; carpentry, 1; saddlery, 1: total, 28.

EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

The Department assisted 156 applicants to employment during the year. The cessation of the Napier-Gisborne railway-construction works caused a large number of men to be thrown on the labour-market. These men have since been employed elsewhere.

The local electric-tramway construction works are employing a fair number of labourers at present.

There has been a big demand for domestic servants, but no supply to meet it. Of the new arrivals from England, very few have made inquiry in this office for employment.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION.

Under the Shearers and Agricultural Labourers' Accommodation Act considerable attention has been given and time occupied in inspecting the accommodation provided by employers for shearers. Numerous notices have been served on sheep-farmers to comply with the Act, and, as a result, a great amount of comfort has been added to the lot of the shearer during the season of his work on the stations. Complaints are, however, still made as to the accommodation provided for shearers, especially in remote parts of the district.

There were 3 prosecutions under the Act during the year against one employer, who was mulcted in a fine of £5, with £12 11s. 9d. costs.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Section 10 of the Amendment Act, 1911, which provides that in most cases agreements for settlement of claims for compensation shall not be binding unless approved by a Stipendiary Magistrate or Inspector of Factories, has thrown a serious responsibility on Inspectors, as, amongst other things, it is necessary before signifying approval to ascertain that the injury caused to the worker is not likely to recur. It would, I think, be an advantage to the workers if provision were made that compensation be paid weekly. Injured workers frequently have waited several weeks, and even months, before they have secured compensation, and this has sometimes entailed hardship.

In only one instance during the year was final approval refused; this was in a case which came before the Stipendiary Magistrate. Owing to the tubercular nature of the accident (the worker having been injured through his finger being pierced by a bone from the dead body of a tuberculous cow), the Magistrate refused to approve unless he had evidence from the surgeon that the man was permanently cured. This was a case where the worker was incapacitated for twenty weeks before receiving his first payment under the Act.

CONCLUSION.

During the year practically the whole of the outlying towns of this district have been visited. A general inspection of the shops and factories has been made, and it was found that the labour laws were being fairly well observed.

I have, &c.,

JOHN JACKSON.

Inspector of Factories.

The Secretary of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.