

end of the financial year. Cottage building has, however, been pushed on very rapidly, and by this means carpenters, joiners, and other mechanics in the building trade have been kept going. Though it is not so apparent as during last year, there is a fair amount of work going on in the country districts, also in the inland towns, some of which are assuming fair proportions. The advent of spring should see a number of heavy jobs in hand in Invercargill.

Iron trades: The different branches of the iron-working industry has made good progress during the year, and employers are satisfied and appear confident of further success in the future. Implement-makers had rather a peculiar season to deal with, but, nevertheless, managed to dispose of their lines as the season came round. In the general engineering there was always enough work on hand to keep all employees on full time, and overtime has been necessary in many cases to keep up with orders. Extensive alterations and additions have recently been made in some of the foundries, which are now in a position to cope with all demands.

Plumbing, gasfitting, &c.: All trades coming under this heading have had a very successful year, and there has at all times been a demand for good men. Gas and water mains have been extended to the outer areas of the town, and citizens have taken full advantage of the conveniences afforded. A new award was made in the plumbing and tinsmithing trade during the year, and, although a few misunderstandings in connection with it arose at the beginning, matters soon settled down, and everything is now working smoothly.

Furniture trades: Notwithstanding that two large Dunedin firms have opened up branches here, all engaged in furniture selling and manufacturing have had a remarkably good year. At times the demand for locally made furniture was so keen that great difficulty was experienced in fulfilling orders.

Coachbuilding: It is claimed that the work turned out in our carriage-factories is equal to anything in the Dominion. There has been a good demand for vehicles of all descriptions, and all those engaged in the trade have had a good year. Motor-body building now forms a large portion of the work turned out, and at the close of the year all the workshops were full up with orders.

Boot and shoe trade: Taken all round, trade has been very steady. In manufacturing a little time was lost by operatives during the early spring of 1912, but latterly every one has been fully employed. Retailers report very satisfactory returns, showing an appreciable advance on last year.

Tailoring: Tailoring firms have every reason to be satisfied with the work of the year. From start to finish orders have been good, and operatives have had almost constant employment. The amount of overtime worked in this trade has been greater by far than that in any other industry in the town. Female operatives have been in keen demand, and the supply continues short.

Dressmaking and millinery: Dressmakers were unable to complete orders within the limit of the ordinary working-day, and the amount of overtime granted almost equalled that worked in the tailoring trade. Milliners were kept going very steadily, and with the assistance of a little overtime managed to put in good time for the year.

MEN'S EMPLOYMENT BRANCH.

Only 50 men registered their names on the "unemployed" list during the year. Of the number 14 were married and 36 single. Eight married and 19 single men were assisted to employment immediately on their application being registered. There has not been any serious cause for complaint on account of want of work, and throughout the whole period under review there has been some demand for able-bodied workers. During the shearing and harvest seasons a number of men passed through the town; very little was seen of them, and no doubt they found employment in some part of the district.

FACTORIES ACT.

The number of factories registered during the year was 357, which is the highest number yet recorded.

Certificates of fitness were issued to 36 young persons under sixteen years of age to work in factories—viz., 17 boys and 19 girls. No doubt the spread of technical education will for a time have the effect of somewhat delaying the entrance of many young people of both sexes to the manufacturing and other industries; but the schooling must in the long-run be better for all concerned, as the children will have gained considerable educational experience, will be more settled in their ideas, and they will consequently be less inclined to shift about than they are when entering employment immediately on leaving the primary schools.

Accidents.—Twenty-six accidents were reported and inquired into during the year. The injuries consisted chiefly of bruises, loss of joints of fingers, and broken limbs, accidents which are inseparable from industrial life.

Two hundred and ninety-nine boys (under sixteen years of age) and women worked 11,040 hours' overtime.

Prosecutions.—There were no prosecutions under the Act.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

There were 5 prosecutions under this Act—2 for failing to close at 1 p.m. on the statutory half-holiday, 2 against one employer for employing female assistants longer than the stipulated number of hours without an interval for meal, and 1 for working female assistants overtime without a permit. In all cases nominal penalties were inflicted. On the whole, shopkeepers have made an honest endeavour to keep within the law.

The annual returns were collected from 389 shops, hotels, and restaurants during the year.