

Shops and Offices Act.—The shops are well conducted. A careful inspection of shops selling food was recently made in company with the borough Sanitary Inspector, and in a number of cases improvements were effected. It was found necessary to take action against only one occupier for a breach of the Act.

Three "requisitions" signed by a majority of the shopkeepers concerned in the respective trades have been gazetted fixing the closing-hours of shops in the trades. I am of the opinion that the Act needs amending on the lines of the 1913 Bill, so that if the shopkeepers in any particular line of business decide to close their shops at a certain hour the specified goods shall not be sold by any other shopkeeper after that hour.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.—The working of the Act in connection with the various awards and agreements operating in the district has been attended with very little friction. The great demand for labour has had the effect of keeping the standard wage in most cases above the minimum fixed by the Court, consequently no charge of having paid less than the minimum wage has occurred this year. Over fifty alleged breaches of awards have been investigated. Many of these related to the various preference clauses. Three such cases were taken to Court.

Shearers' and Agricultural Labourers' Accommodation Act.—I visited eleven sheep-stations during the year. At eight of these I found that improvements which had been required by last year's notices had been carried out, and in three cases I left notices requiring either improvements or new accommodation. A special inspection of shearers' accommodation at those stations in the far-outlying districts was made by another Inspector.

district.

Servants Registry Offices Act.—There are now only three servants' registry-offices in this

Men's Employment Branch.—During the year 446 persons have made application for work, and of this number 164 have been found employment, principally at labouring-work. During the year there has been no hardship felt through lack of employment. Although occasionally men have called at the office a second time, work was undoubtedly available in the country.

NAPIER.

The Inspector (Mr. J. Jackson) reports:—

General.—This district has experienced a prosperous year. The seasons have been good for sheep-farming, dairying, and the fruitgrowing industries, while the frozen-meat trade is rapidly expanding. The building and allied trades, too, have been very active.

Factories Act.—Visits of inspection have been made to all factories. The various laws have been well observed by occupiers, it having been necessary to take only one case before the Court.

Forty-five accidents in factories were reported during the year, but only three of these were serious.

Shops and Offices Act.—All shops and licensed hotels have been inspected, and the administration of the Act has been fairly free from friction, there having been but one prosecution. A number of minor breaches were discovered. Verbal warning followed by a written communication is generally sufficient to ensure compliance with the Act.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.—The administration of the Act, the awards of the Court, and industrial agreements has been carried out with a minimum amount of friction. Whilst the rest of the Dominion was last November involved in strikes Hawke's Bay remained undisturbed. One important case, under the lockout provisions of the Act, was taken against a sheep-farmer for discharging shearers who had refused to shear "wet" sheep. The Magistrate inflicted a penalty of £25. The defendant appealed to the Court of Arbitration, and though the appeal was allowed on the ground that sheep "wet" by perspiration were not "wet sheep" within the meaning of clause 13 of the award no costs were given against the Department. In another case arising out of the foregoing dispute the same sheep-farmer was required to pay back wages to shearers amounting to £26 13s. 4d.

Shearers' and Agricultural Labourers' Accommodation Act.—As a result of a complete inspection of the shearing-sheds it was found that all sheep-farmers who had previously been notified to provide adequate accommodation had complied with the notices served on them.

Men's Employment Branch.—Work for unskilled labour has been fairly plentiful throughout the year, and seventy-eight applicants were assisted to employment.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

The Inspector (Mr. W. Slaughter) reports:—

General.—The year just closed may be considered as generally satisfactory. The dairying industry is in a prosperous state, and good prices for butter and cheese have been maintained. The manufacture of cheese is increasing, while a number of factories have installed machinery for the extraction of casein. The meat freezing and preserving industry has had a very busy season, and owing to the increased quantity of stock coming forward the works at Waitara are to be increased to double their present capacity. It is expected that the new portion will be ready for occupation by the opening of the next season. The petroleum industry is considered to have made satisfactory progress during the year, and has given employment to about 120 men. A large refinery has been erected and some 277,000 gallons of crude oil have been treated.