

cabinetmaking has maintained a normal position, but there has been a decided tendency for trade to fluctuate. Sash and door factories and local sawmills have been active. The engineering trade appears to have been slack. The cycle and motor trades have reported good business. The tailoring trade has, on the whole, had a satisfactory year, but the permits for overtime were not exhausted, as has been the case hitherto, and there has not been the demand for female labour as in previous years. The woollen-mills and dressmaking and millinery workrooms have had a good year. The boot industry has not been so buoyant, and at times the factories were very slack. The output of the meat-freezing industry and allied trades in and around Wellington has been very satisfactory.

Factories Act.—Little trouble is now caused in the administration of this Act. There are several premises which year by year are becoming totally inadequate and unsuitable for the purposes for which they are used, and the question of refusing to renew the registration of same under the Act will have to be carefully considered.

The number of accidents reported during the year was 142, none of which proved fatal, and the majority of the injuries were of a minor nature.

Shops and Offices Act.—The administration of this Act has necessitated many cases being brought before the Court. The principal cases were for failing to close under the various requisitions (from the majority of the shopkeepers in the respective trades fixing closing-hours), and in every instance judgment was given in the Department's favour.

In my opinion provision for dining-room accommodation for shop-assistants should be made similar to that for factory workers.

The total overtime worked during the year was 10,986 hours, by 1,479 women and boys.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.—The administration of this Act and of the awards and industrial agreements made thereunder has this year been very difficult, due no doubt to the strike of waterside workers, drivers, and others. The total number of complaints received during the year was 355, out of which forty-four prosecutions arose. Sixty-nine were on inquiry found to be unsubstantiated, while the remainder were settled by the payment of arrears of wages.

Workers' Compensation Act.—The 1913 amendment to the Act repealing section 10 of the 1910 Act has removed a certain amount of responsibility from the Inspectors, in that their approval of the settlement of claims for compensation is not now necessary. Nevertheless some insurance companies have intimated that they are prepared to accept the advice of the Department's officers, and thus obviate the necessity of additional expense to the workers in obtaining independent advice.

CHRISTCHURCH.

The Acting Officer in Charge (Mr. A. Donald) reports:—

General.—Considering the recent industrial upheaval which took place in November and December last, the year under review has been good from a trade standpoint, and since the strike ended business has "gone ahead" at a remarkable pace, and compares favourably with the corresponding period in former years. The building trade has, for the greater part of the year, been very good in all its branches. The engineering trade cannot be said to have experienced a good year. The clothing and millinery trades, not being seriously affected by the strike, have been exceptionally busy throughout the year. Labour in these particular trades has at times been very scarce.

Factories Act.—The administration of this Act has, on the whole, not been very difficult, as the requirements have been very well observed by employers. The sanitary conditions and provisions against fire have been particularly satisfactory, and there is a growing tendency to more completely observe the law in these directions. During the year it was found necessary to take proceedings under this Act in seven cases only, which number shows a substantial decrease on previous years.

The number of accidents in factories shows a considerable increase on last year, but, as in previous years, a very large majority of these were slight; almost the whole of the accidents were caused by the carelessness or overconfidence of the workers, and not through the want of guards and other protection.

Shops and Offices Act.—There is a general endeavour on the part of shopkeepers to observe the law, and it was found necessary to take action against shopkeepers in only thirty cases. Judgment was given for the Department in every instance.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.—During the year the number of complaints under this Act and under the current awards and industrial agreements (amounting to 320) showed no diminution, but as a large majority of them were trivial and unintentional it was found necessary to take action in only twenty-nine cases against employers and four cases against employees.

Workers' Compensation Act.—Although the Inspectors of the Department have by the coming into force of the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act of 1913 been relieved of the responsibility of approving the proposed settlements of claims for compensation, workers still avail themselves of the opportunity of seeking advice from the Department.

Servants' Registry Offices Act.—During the year care has been taken to see that the provisions of this Act have been properly carried out.

Shearers' and Agricultural Labourers' Accommodation Act.—A fair amount of inspection has been carried out in connection with the accommodation provided for shearers and agricultural labourers, and where the accommodation has been found to be unsatisfactory steps have been taken to have improvements made.