

There are no complaints about the infringement of the existing Labour Acts, and I consider the workers in this district have very little to complain of compared with the reports I see in the papers from time to time from other places. About two months ago there were eight men employed clearing drains, and in the Dashwood Pass Railway at that time there were about as many more wanted to be taken on; their names were taken down, and on Monday last, 30th April, these men received notice that they would be taken on, and two only applied, the others said they had employment. There are very few unemployed in Blenheim. We have a few occasional swaggers looking for work.

I have, &c.,

M. SCANLAN, Inspector of Factories.

E. Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

GREYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Greymouth, 5th May, 1894.

For the past year I have to report very few changes in the condition of labour from the district under my charge.

Altogether 212 men have been employed on various works, the number of those dependent on their earnings averaging about four to each man. A marked feature of the year's operations has been the satisfactory extension of the co-operative principle to skilled labour. The new railway-station and the police-barracks have been erected on the system of partnership contracts, and I must say that all classes of labour employed worked harmoniously together, and that the work performed is so thorough and substantial as to call forth praise from disinterested experts. Mr. George Cook, of the Public Works Department, made out the quantities and estimates for these buildings, and the even rate of wages earned by the men justifies the care bestowed on his calculations. To summarise the skilled and unskilled labour, I might say that 108 men were employed in removing earthwork and general navvying, and that, including platelayers, 104 were engaged in the skilled branches. Of the latter, there were thirty-eight carpenters, two bricklayers, three workers in concrete, nine painters, and one plumber. The largest number of men engaged was from Hokitika, where 101 worked at the new railway-station, as against forty-three employed at Kumara roadside station, and sixty-eight at the Grey Police-offices and Railway buildings.

Since my last report there has been no great falling-off in the number of the unemployed, and many of the men working on the formation of the Grey-Hokitika Railway have only had irregular work up to date. The timber trade has now reached an export of 143,000ft. per month, and, as fresh developments are going on, the industry will continue to absorb labour. During the year small contractors who were fortunate to hit on a belt of silver-pine near a road made from 10s. to 12s. per day in squaring and hewing sleepers. Wet weather, of course, reduces the average earnings, but some few sleeper-parties made very good wages, and the output from the district necessitated special steamer charters. The collapse at Brunnerton, consequent on the limited scale of operations by the Grey Valley Coal Company, and their threat to abandon the mine at the end of the year, has brought a few Brunner names on to my books. As I write, contracts are being let by the Greymouth-Point Elizabeth Railway Company for the construction of six miles of line from Greymouth to Coal Creek; and if the co-operative system were adopted the whole of the unengaged labour in the district would be provided for. I sincerely hope that the successful tenderers will not import men, as there is an abundance of local labour offering.

Generally speaking a lamentable want of energy and enterprise on the part of young men is a feature in this district, and, if they exhibited the same courage in mining exploration as was evinced by the "old-timers," new and lucrative fields of labour would be opened up. On the West Coast there are characteristics which the Bureau has to deal with not found elsewhere. Miners are men of very independent spirit, and dislike any notion of relief being associated with public works. I apprehend that the object of the Bureau is to afford relief, and perhaps it might be better to give agents larger discretionary powers to pick parties of really needy men, without being governed by the rotation of the list of names on the Bureau books.

I have, &c.,

W. H. BOASE, Agent.

E. Tregear, Esq., Secretary, Department of Labour, Wellington.

CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Bureau of Industries, 2nd May, 1894.

In submitting my report of the year's operations now terminated, I beg to state that when I took charge of this office, on the 17th April, 1893, I found that no proper indexed and consecutive records had been kept. This was due to the fact that my predecessors could not possibly keep pace with the duties of so large a factory district, and meet the demands upon their time in dealing with the applicants for employment at this branch of the Bureau of Industries. So soon as I made the position known to the head of the department I received instructions to procure the necessary assistance.

LABOUR.

My first duty after taking charge was to come in contact with the demands of large numbers of unemployed. Several meetings had been held in Cathedral Square during the month of March and the beginning of April. The fact that the Government had just sent sixty odd men to road-making at the Bealey and Taipo brought a large number from the West Coast, Wellington, South Canterbury, and Otago to swell the ranks of the unemployed in this city. Fortunately, the Government had previously secured the Cheviot Estate, which provided road-making work for a large number. In addition to this a great many were forwarded to employment on the co-operative