

HASTINGS.

SIR,—

Hastings, 27th April, 1897.

I have the honour to forward labour report for year ending the 31st March, 1897.

FACORIES.

There have been thirty-one registered, as against thirty-four for year ended the 31st March, 1896. Two hundred and forty-two persons are employed, six of the number being females. I have been here only two months, but during that short period, from general observations, I am convinced that the Factories Act works well, and is respected.

THE SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

I believe the provisions of this Act are fairly complied with, the half-holiday during the week being strictly observed.

THE BUILDING TRADE.

During my short time here I have noticed that carpenters have been busily engaged, although I cannot say that many new buildings are being put up. A few new cottages have been erected in the town, and others are being repaired which have been partially damaged by recent fires, &c. Two buildings have been destroyed by fire during the last two months—one a large dwelling-house with the furnishings heavily insured, and a small cottage with contents (furniture) was also destroyed.

RETAIL TRADES.

The different shops under this heading appear to be fairly engaged. Although at times it has been remarked to me by men in these lines that trade is dull, still I notice that they are all busily engaged, their shops and places of business well patronised, and fresh supplies of goods being constantly delivered at their doors.

BLACKSMITHS AND WHEELWRIGHTS.

These trades are constantly kept employed, and, this district being so well suited for agricultural pursuits, the work of repairing and making new implements should never cease.

MISCELLANEOUS.

I notice a large number of tramps pass through this town every week, and I have received complaints from the settlers in the neighbourhood of the idle and annoying habits of these men, begging and hanging about the farms and homesteads, and calling at the houses for food, &c., when they know that the men are absent; and they demand the very best food in the cupboard—and they get it—and at every opportunity they thieve, and so are a constant annoyance to the settlers. I hope the day is not far off when this class of idlers will be compelled to keep off the roads. Work of some sort could surely be provided, which, if they did not accept, they should be sent to gaol and compelled to work. With very few exceptions the tramps on the roads in Hawke's Bay to-day are the same who were travelling the Wairarapa last summer. I know the most of them, as they used to get relief (rations) from me in the South Wairarapa.

I regret, owing to my recent transfer to this district—February, 1897—that I am not in a position to report more fully upon the labour-market, but there certainly are very few men out of employment in the town, and those few have been honestly endeavouring to obtain work. The recent disastrous floods have caused a great deal of temporary employment by the Government and private persons who can afford it. As the damage caused by the flood calls for special report by me, but as my duties here entirely prevent my visiting the localities principally affected, I cannot do better than forward an extract from the Hastings daily paper, the *Standard*, of the 19th instant (hereto attached), which gives a full account of the flood and the damage in the different parts of the district.

I am informed there have not been any prosecutions under any of the Acts affecting labour during the year in this district.

I have, &c.,

E. Tregear, Esq.,

F. CHAS. SMITH, Inspector of Factories.

Secretary, Department of Labour, Wellington.

WAIPAWA.

SIR,—

Police-station, Waipawa, 26th April, 1897.

I beg to report that during the year 1896, and since January of this year, the factories seem to have been carried on smoothly, the owners having a due regard to everything in connection with the Act, and willing at all times to comply with the terms of it. No complaints have been made by employes, and no prosecution occurred. With respect to the labour market, the demand appears to have been equal to the supply, and there was no necessity for the services of the Labour Agent; so this district seems to have fared well in every way.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

J. TREANOR, Inspector of Factories.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

SIR,—

Labour Office, Palmerston North, 31st March, 1897.

I have the honour to forward to you the annual report.

Up to date I have registered sixty-one factories, giving employment to 385 persons—307 males and 78 females. The Act, as a whole, has been fairly well complied with, no prosecutions under its provisions having taken place during the year.

All the factories have been working full time, and occasional permits have been applied for to work overtime.