

Permits to work 2,233 hours' overtime were granted during the year. This was principally in the dressmaking and tailoring trades. This represents an increase of 661 hours on the figures for last year. In no instance was the legal limit of hours exceeded.

The Act is working well, and prosecutions have not been necessary in Napier. Six informations were laid in Hastings, convictions being secured in each case.

EMPLOYMENT OF BOYS OR GIRLS WITHOUT PAYMENT PREVENTION ACT.

I had very little difficulty in enforcing the provisions of this Act. When it first came into operation several employers dismissed some of their unpaid girls, but within a very short time, with the exception of three girls, all were taken on again, and now the Act is working very smoothly.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act continues to give general satisfaction, both to employer and employed. The hours are well observed as regards the shops, but with banks and offices it is difficult to find whether the hours are observed or not.

Permission was granted to work 208 hours' overtime during the year, which is a considerable decrease on last year's returns.

I was compelled to lay several informations to enforce the provisions of this Act, both in Napier and Hastings, securing convictions in each case.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

Unfortunately I was unable to pay the attention to this Act that is necessary, as the time for visiting these sheds clashed this year with my duties as Registrar of Electors. However, I visited six stations, four of which were quite satisfactory, and notices were served on the occupiers of the other two to build accommodation. Next season I hope to be able to visit each station in the district.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

This Act works very satisfactorily. The offices are in the hands of respectable people, and there is no overcharging.

I have, &c.,

L. D. BROWETT, Inspector of Factories.

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

NEW PLYMOUTH.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 17th March, 1900.

I have the honour to forward the factory returns up to this date, which are as follows: Number of factories registered, 105 (I expect a few more to come in this month); fees collected for these factories, £22 16s.; number employed, 463, of which 403 are males and sixty females.

The Act has worked well in this district, and I have no complaints either from the owners of factories or those employed by them. I have not had to prosecute any person for breaches of the Act during the year, and on the whole the working has been satisfactory.

I have, &c.,

MARTIN D. STAGPOOLE, Inspector of Factories.

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

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wanganui, 5th April, 1900.

I have the honour to report on the working of the various Acts in this district for the year ending 31st March, 1900.

FACTORIES ACT.

There are 120 factories registered this year, being a decrease of six on the previous year. The number employed is 723 males and 138 females, or a total of 861 hands, as against 725 males and 137 females, or a total of 862 hands, last year, being a decrease of one.

Permits have been granted to sixteen males to work eighty hours' and to ninety-seven females to work 840 hours' overtime.

Three accidents have been reported during the year, none of which were of a serious nature.

The factories generally are clean, well lighted, and comfortable, and the sanitary arrangements are all that can be desired. The employés appear to be healthy and strong. There has been much less overtime for females and lads for this year than during the previous one; but, on the other hand, adult males have worked considerably more overtime than can be good for them. I have had no complaints at all, and therefore I take it for granted that those who are affected by the Act are satisfied with it.

There were no prosecutions under the Act during the year.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

Employers and employés seem to appreciate this Act.

The sanitary arrangements and sitting-accommodation of all the shops where females are employed are in conformity with the requirements of the Act.

There have been three prosecutions during the year. A fine was imposed in one case, and two were dismissed.