

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Eight certificates under this Act have been issued, being five renewals and three first certificates.

LABOUR.

Forty-six men have registered their names during the year, thirty-seven of whom obtained work, through this office, in this district. The remainder were of the wandering class, and left the town. There are very few men out of work here at the present time.

Tradesmen generally have had an excellent year. The steady progress of this district is remarkable, and from what I can learn this steady advance is likely to continue for some years to come. Steady and reliable workers of all classes have, in my opinion, a promising future before them. The buildings that have been erected during the last few years and those now in course of erection are of a much more substantial character than those of former years. Several brick buildings are being built, and I believe the time is not far distant when brick or stone—earthquakes notwithstanding—will take the place of wood in most of our principal buildings.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

I have inspected forty-four shearing-sheds under this Act. Thirty-six of these had sufficient and comfortable accommodation, and eight had not the accommodation required by the Act. Notices that section 9 of the Act must be complied with have been served upon the owners of these eight sheds. A report in detail of my inspection has been forwarded to the Right Hon. the Minister of Labour.

EMPLOYMENT OF BOYS OR GIRLS WITHOUT PAYMENT PREVENTION ACT.

I have had no difficulty with this Act. There were very few in this district getting less wages than the statutory minimum.

WAGES PROTECTION ACT.

From inquiries I have made I believe this Act is well observed by employers here.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I feel gratified at being able to reiterate what I stated in my last annual report—viz., that the workers in this district are, with few exceptions, a sober, respectable, and contented class.

I have, &c.,

W. G. BLAKE, Inspector of Factories.

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

PALMERSTON NORTH.

SIR,—

Labour Office, Palmerston North, 31st March, 1900.

I have the honour to forward you a brief outline of the different Acts of the workings over which I have control for this district.

I have again to report a very satisfactory state of things. During the year under review one or two estates were cut up into small holdings and sold for close settlement, liberal terms being given; this gave those who know and like the district an opportunity of securing a home.

The dairying industry is a great boon to the small settlers, and the flax industry is also of great assistance to the district.

In my last report I stated that the population had increased. I have much pleasure in repeating it in this report. Palmerston North is an important railway terminus, and from its central situation it has many attractions. The land in the district is the best in the colony, without exception, for either crops or grazing.

The principal work carried on in the district is fencing, road-work, stumping, clearing the land for the plough, firewood-cutting, &c., and good men had no difficulty in getting work. The building trade was exceptionally good during the year, and still continues good.

The district, no doubt, is very prosperous.

FACTORIES ACT.

During the year I have registered seventy-nine factories, employing 492 persons—411 males and eighty-one females—a large increase on last year's return.

Permits were given to work overtime during the busy seasons.

There were no prosecutions during the year.

There were no accidents to speak of except one, which occurred in connection with a flax-mill, owing to the bursting of a drum, one man getting his jaw fractured and one of his shoulders dislocated. From inquiries made no one was to blame. A prosecution is pending under section 29.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

Nearly the whole of the sheds come within the provisions of section 12 of the Act, and those which do not have ample accommodation for their shearers. I have visited those sheds, and have also seen the shearers, both before and after shearing, and have received no complaints.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

Very little need be said of this Act, as it works well in this district. The half-holiday is closely observed by all, and no prosecutions took place under its provisions during the year.