

purpose of controlling the sale price of food-supplies. If in this colony, as in the United States, trusts existed that closed the whole field of sale on producers, and over large territories precluded the farmer from selling except to one buyer, and to him only at starvation rates, the agriculturist and pastoralist would, as properly denounce such a trust as the worker does the combination which improperly raises the selling-price of his food in order that a few shareholders may draw large dividends.

The Servants' Registry Offices Act has been well observed; there are very few cases of complaint now made against the keepers of registry offices, and the business stands on a far higher level than it did a few years ago. The Shearers Accommodation Act has been of great benefit. It is one of the most arduous duties of Factory Inspectors to visit outlying stations and runs (sometimes in very difficult country to traverse) in order to personally see to the accommodation provided for the wandering class of labour utilised in the shearing season. It is, however, worth all the cost and trouble taken to note the improvement in the class of dwelling, &c., provided. It would be well if a similar system of inspection could be extended to large farms and sawmills, where comfort often is "conspicuous by its absence," and places hardly fit for human beings are provided as sufficient for labourers and bushmen.

The *Labour Journal* has risen greatly in demand, over 240 new subscribers having sent in their names during the last two months. The third volume of "Awards, &c., under the Arbitration Act" has been published by the Department and issued.

I gratefully acknowledge the loyal service and faithful attention to duty shown by the staff of my Department in every branch of its business, both in the towns and in the rural districts.

I have also to acknowledge the valuable assistance given by officers of the Health Department during the year. Their capable and willing assistance in the effort to procure improved sanitation has been of the greatest service to the Department of Labour.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 23rd June, 1903.

During the past year the work of the Head Office has greatly increased in all its branches, most notably in Factories, Shops and Shop-assistants, and Conciliation and Arbitration, the latter being especially heavy, no less than 69 new unions being registered during the year—viz., 45 of workers and 24 of employers. In each of these cases rules had to be revised, certificates of incorporation issued, &c. There were twenty-seven complete amendments and twenty partial amendments of rules registered. In connection with this Act it is pleasing to be able to say that quite a number of cases have been settled by our Inspectors without having recourse to the Court, to the satisfaction of both employer and employed.

The monthly issue of the Journal of the Department also entails a great deal of work, as the whole of the compilation of its various parts is done by the ordinary office staff. Volume iii. of the Awards of the Court was also compiled and issued. This involved a large amount of work, there being no less than 221 cases to classify according to districts and trades. Volume i. of the Decisions of the Arbitration Court under the Workers' Compensation Act was also compiled and published.

During the year 3,879 letters were sent out, also 900 telegrams, while 43 circulars, equalling 4,000 letters, were sent out to Inspectors, unions, and associations. The number of letters received was 4,743.

A large part of the correspondence is from and to England, Canada, United States of America, and Australia, while India and Continental countries also furnish correspondents.

We are also in constant communication with all the United States Bureaux of Labour Statistics; also the Labour Departments of England, Canada, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Austria, who exchange with us all their journals, reports, &c. Even far-off Japan furnishes us with its monthly labour publication.

Every English and American mail brings letters from persons inquiring as to the prospects in New Zealand, and the replies thereto have been the means of bringing many people to the country, where on landing they are given all information, and in a great many cases employment found for them immediately. Quite a number of these people are possessed of capital to the extent of several hundreds of pounds. So far as we have been able to trace, exceedingly few of those who have made use of the Department have failed to do well. Of course, there are some who, through physical infirmity, bad habits, &c., have not been a success, but these people would not do well anywhere.

During the year I visited all of our principal branches and a large number of the smaller ones, and find that our officers as a rule carry out their difficult duties in a manner pleasing to all. In a