

LABOUR.

During the year 398 men, with 936 dependants, have found employment on Government and private works.

Owing to reports that a large number of men would be required for the shifting of the railway-station and the construction of the electric-tramway lines very large numbers flocked in from all parts. Many men who were in employment in other parts of the colony left their work and came to Dunedin, and hung about with the view of being employed on the said works until the little money they had was spent, then a rush was made by them to get employment on the Government works. Just at this time large numbers of troopers were returning from South Africa, who also desired to be employed, but only a small percentage availed themselves of such work, most having obtained employment elsewhere. It is pleasing to state that there are now very few applicants for employment, except new arrivals from the Australian States and the Old Country; notwithstanding the influx, most of them go into the country and find work.

On the whole, the prospects are very promising for the coming year. The building trade is surprisingly good. Manufacturers and tradesmen are busy. Good prices are ruling for all products, and there is every prospect of a prosperous year.

I have, &c.,

J. B. LINDSAY,

Inspector of Factories.

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

RUSSELL.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Russell, 1st April, 1903.

I have the honour to submit for your information my annual report upon the working of the Factories Act in this district for the year ending the 31st March, 1903.

It is gratifying to state that there have been no accidents, no complaints, and no prosecutions. Business on the whole has been fairly brisk.

The kauri-gum industry is, so far as prices for gum are concerned, much better than the previous year. The swamps, owing to having had drains cut through them, were dry enough to be worked, and I hear that fair wages have been made by those engaged digging therein.

The mullet-canning factories at Russell, Pururua, and Waikare have not had the supply of fish to work on as in the previous year.

At Whangamumu those engaged whaling had a most successful season, due, no doubt, to the modern appliances used and the assistance of a steam-launch to tow the whales ashore. Eighteen whales were caught and landed, yielding a large quantity of oil, and the carcasses making several tons of fish manure. The oil and manure met with a ready sale.

At Ohaeawai a butter-factory and at Okaihau a creamery (the first in the Bay of Islands district) were erected, and commenced operations during the year.

WM. PARDY,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

ARATAPU.

SIR,—

Police-station, Aratapu, 31st March, 1903.

I have the honour to report for your information that 33 factories, employing 256 males and 12 females, were registered during the year.

The sawmills have been kept very busy. In some cases they worked night-shifts.

Eight accidents have been reported; a broken leg was the most serious.

Four prosecutions against one firm for employing boys under age without a permit, and not allowing boys a half-holiday on Labour Day, were heard before the Magistrate, who convicted in each case.

All matters in connection with the factories are very satisfactory.

The labour-market has been fairly brisk during the year. Another sawmill has just started at Raupo. The shipbuilding yard at Te Kopuru, the property of Brown and Sons, has been kept busy building schooners, steamers, and barges. Four creameries and a butter-factory have been built by the North Wairoa Dairy Company, and are doing well, the factory exporting so much butter as to leave the local requirements short.

The introduction of the forty-eight hours per week has been a great boon to the workers in sawmills, and quite as much work is now done as was done in the days of long hours.

I have, &c.,

The Chief Inspector, Labour Department, Wellington.

N. SCOTT, Constable.

GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Police-station, Gisborne, 31st March, 1903.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report, as Inspector of Factories, for the year ending the 31st March, 1903.

During the year 69 factories were registered, being an increase of 8 on the preceding year, employing 558 males and 80 females, totalling 639 persons, being an increase of 90 more persons employed than during the previous year.

Seven permits were granted to young persons under sixteen years of age to work in factories.

Seven hundred and twenty hours' overtime were worked in factories by 60 persons, and 60 hours' overtime in shops by 12 persons.