

Permits under section 27 were issued to 28 boys and 20 girls.

The amount of overtime worked in factories by males was 6,242 hours, and 6,993 hours by females. Nearly the whole of this was in the clothing and iron trades.

Speaking generally this Act is well observed, but from a sanitary point of view some of the places occupied as factories are not altogether what I would like to see them. I had the assistance of the Public Health Inspector, and we caused improvements to be made which have had the effect of making things much better. There are other matters that still require attention, but I do not anticipate any trouble over them. At my request fire-escapes have been erected at three high buildings.

There has been one prosecution, four charges were laid. The decisions were in favour of the Department on each charge.

Seventeen accidents have been reported, three of which resulted fatally: one man was struck on the head with a piece of falling timber, the other two were in flax-mills, and were caused through men interfering with belts near the shafting whilst the machinery was in motion. One was a high shaft, the other comparatively low; in both cases the men neglected the ordinary rules of caution. I have requested mill-owners not to allow men to put belts on pulleys whilst the machinery is in motion. The other accidents were slight.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act continues to work satisfactorily, and there is very little trouble in enforcing its provisions. Of course, there are always a few people who will take liberties with any Act, and for doing so with this Act three of them were brought before the Magistrate, and a conviction was recorded in each case.

SERVANTS REGISTRY-OFFICE ACT.

There are six registry-offices here, but they are well conducted and give no trouble.

I have, &c.,

L. D. BROWETT,

Inspector of Factories.

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

WINTON.

SIR,—

Winton, 9th May, 1903.

I have the honour to report that the labour laws have been well observed here during the year, no breaches having come under my notice. The Shops and Shop-assistants Acts are well observed no complaint having been made. No disputes of any kind have arisen between employers and employees.

LABOUR.

The same difficulty exists here this year as did last year in obtaining hands for the harvesting and threshing seasons, so much so that I had to wire to Invercargill and Orepuki for men. The great scarcity of labour is doubtless due to some extent to the fact that the rabbit-trapping season is in full swing at the same time, and the earnings at trapping are very much more—viz., from £15 to £30 per month, as against 10d. per hour paid by farmers.

The flax-milling industry has gained great ground here. There are a number of mills in operation, absorbing a number of men. From inquiries made I find that fibre to the value of £120,000 has been exported from this district during the past year.

The sawmilling industry continues in the same state of activity as in past years; all mills are working full time, and are barely able to cope with orders to hand.

There are three dairy factories here, being an increase of two during the year. This is a coming industry here.

The threshing season is now in full swing here, and some phenomenal yields are recorded—viz., from 70 to 110 bushels of oats per acre. There will be a great surplus of oats available for export. The ruling prices are lower this year than was the case last year.

Taking the district generally it is very prosperous, and progressing by leaps and bounds.

I have, &c.,

H. P. RASMUSSEN, Inspector.

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

Reports have also been received from Inspectors of Factories at Akaroa, Alexandra, Amberley, Arrowtown, Ashburton, Ashhurst, Cambridge, Clinton, Clive, Coalgate, Collingwood, Coromandel, Culverden, Dargaville, Denniston, Eltham, Fairlie, Featherston, Foxton, Geraldine, Greytown, Hamilton, Hampden, Hastings, Havelock, Hawkesbury, Helensville, Herbertville, Hikurangi, Hokianga, Huntly, Inglewood, Kaiapoi, Kaikoura, Kaitangata, Kaitiaki, Karangahake, Kihikihi, Kimbolton, Kumara, Kurow, Lawrence, Leeston, Levin, Little River, Lumsden, Lyell, Malvern, Manaia, Mangaweka, Mangonui, Marton, Mataura, Mercer, Methven, Middlemarch, Milton, Moa-whanga, Mosgiel, Naseby, Ngapara, Ngaruawahia, Omaka, Ongarue, Onehunga, Ophir, Opunake, Orepuki, Ormond, Ormondville, Otahuhu, Otaki, Otautau, Otorohanga, Outram, Oxford, Paeroa, Pahi, Palmerston North, Palmerston (South), Papakura, Patea, Pembroke, Picton, Pleasant Point, Port Awanui, Raglan, Rakaia, Rangiora, Reefton, Riverton, Ross, Rotorua, Roxburgh, St. Bathans, Southbridge, Stratford, Taihape, Takaka, Tapanui, Tauranga, Te Aroha, Te Awamutu, Tenui, Te Puke, Thames, Tolaga Bay, Upper Hutt, Waihi, Waimate, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Wairoa, Waitahuna, Waitara, Waitotara, Whangarei, Whangaroa. These reports all agree in stating that the provisions of the Factories and Shops Acts have been well observed, and that very few unemployed, if any, are to be seen in their respective districts.