

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

During the year nine registry offices have been licensed. On the whole, they are conducted satisfactorily; but on one occasion I had to administer a caution for excessive charging, the amount in excess being promptly refunded to the applicant for employment.

LABOUR.

Work in all branches has been plentiful. Thirty-four people have been assisted to employment. Several new factories are in course of erection, and new industries are about to be introduced to Wanganui.

Industrially, Wanganui is progressing rapidly, and gives promise of becoming a large manufacturing centre. The *Labour Journal* continues to be eagerly inquired for by both employers and workers, and all parties recognise and appreciate its usefulness.

I have, &c.,

W. H. McQUARTERS,
Inspector of Factories, Wanganui.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

HAWERA.

SIR,—

Police-station, Hawera, 31st March, 1904.

I have the honour to report for your information upon the working of the Factories and Shops and Shop-assistants Acts during the past year.

There were 87 factories and workrooms registered, employing 297 males and 75 females, as against 74 factories and workrooms registered for the previous year, employing 265 males and 52 females, which shows a large increase. A brickworks has been started here recently, which will employ several hands when in full work.

Unskilled labour has at times been in great demand.

The building trade has been very brisk.

Dairying has been in a very flourishing state, a number of new arrivals in the district taking up dairy farms. Three new creameries have been erected in different parts of this district within the past few months to meet the requirements of suppliers of milk.

Bushmen have been in demand, but cannot be got.

There have been no prosecutions. The various labour Acts have been working satisfactorily.

I have, &c.,

J. S. BERNARD, Sergeant,
Inspector of Factories.

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

STRATFORD.

SIR,—

Inspector of Factories' Office, Stratford, 7th May, 1904.

In forwarding my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1904, I beg to state that the Factories Act has worked smoothly for the past year, there being no prosecutions.

No overtime or young persons' permits were issued by me.

Fifty-eight factories were registered for the year ending the 31st March, 1904.

The building trade keeps fairly busy, there being a number of new buildings in course of erection. The engineering trade, which includes plumbing, is very busy. Clothing trade fairly good. General retail trade not quite so brisk as this time last year, the general-store keepers going on cash lines, and not allowing the former undue-credit system.

There is very little unskilled labour required in the borough, and the road contractors are reducing hands for the winter, so that I do not think this district will afford so much employment for unskilled labour as in former years.

Many settlers on the East Road have notified me that they and their sons would like to get work on the Toko Branch Railway should the work be pushed on this winter.

Thirty-one men, with 113 persons dependent upon them, have been assisted during the year by sending them on to the Toko Railway construction-works.

Yours, &c.,

W. D. RYAN, Inspector.

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

NEW PLYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, New Plymouth, 3rd May, 1904.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ending the 31st March, 1904, as follows :—

The total number of factories registered during the year ending as above was 130, the same number as last year, employing 529 males and 103 females, as against 483 males and 117 females last year, an increase of 46 males and a decrease of 14 females. The increase so far would lead to the conclusion that a fair advance has been made in business generally.

The past year has been unprecedented in the amount of butter sent away at good prices, but yet money is tight. The building boom which was in existence twelve months ago has fallen away, and at least two hundred artisans have sought fresh fields for labour. This, together with an increase in the number of business places, and a boom in values of suburban sections, is perhaps responsible for the complaints of business being dull.