

Re labour: There have been only three applications for work during the year; these were from passing swaggers, and work was found for them. There has been a fair amount of work about this district during the year, and all local hands have been fairly well employed. The builders have been very busy, and are likely to continue so for some time. The twine-mill has been working three shifts all the year. Flax-mills have worked full time. Very little overtime has been worked.

The rate of wages paid to boys between fifteen and eighteen years of age at flax-mills runs from 12s. to £1 4s. per week, and men are paid from £1 16s. to £2 2s.

I have, &c.,

T. A. EVENDEN,
Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

ASHBURTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Ashburton, 31st March, 1904.

I beg to submit my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1904.

Factories: There has been an increase of twenty-nine factories registered this year. Trade generally has been good in all branches, especially the building trades. The freezing-works have been well employed, and the woollen-factory has been running night shifts to cope with orders. There have been seven accidents during the year. Two were serious: one was through a man's hand slipping on the smooth plate of a buzzer saw, resulting in the severing of part of two fingers; in the other case a boy had two of his fingers torn by the teeth of a wool-washing machine. This last case was through the boy's own recklessness and disobedience to orders. The others were only slight and purely accidental.

Shops and Shop-assistants Act: On the whole, I may state that the Act is well carried out, although at first I found the shopkeepers rather lax in closing at the proper time.

Servants' registry offices: There are only three offices licensed; they are in the hands of competent people and are well conducted.

Sanitary matters: In consequence of the principal business part of this town being so congested, I find great difficulty in keeping these matters up to a standard I should like to see, and I often avail myself of the services of the Borough Inspector to assist me in the work.

Labour: I have had only a few applications for work—from men who have come from other parts of the colony. No applications have been made by local men, which is a satisfactory indication of the general prosperity of the district.

Shearers' accommodation: On paying the annual visit to the sheds in this district, I am pleased to say that I found them all in good order, and the men well satisfied with the treatment they received.

Permits to young persons: There have been 25 certificates issued during the year—13 to males and 12 to females.

Overtime permits: Permits have been issued to 65 persons, who have worked 1,128½ hours.

In conclusion, I have to return my thanks to all for the courtesy and consideration accorded to me while in the execution of my various duties.

I have, &c.,

R. S. BEAN,
Inspector of Factories.

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

TIMARU.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Timaru, 10th May, 1904.

I have the honour to submit for your information my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1904.

FACTORIES.

I am pleased to say that several necessary improvements have been made during the year. I have had little or no trouble in getting factory-owners to comply with my requests, especially in matters pertaining to sanitary arrangements, and this is especially so when erecting new factories, every attention being given by employers to have everything up to date. These new arrangements are evidently being enjoyed by the employees, and no doubt pay the employer twofold, and tend to a better mutual understanding.

During the year there have been 170 factories registered, an increase of 45 on last year. The number of persons employed is 1,322—viz., 1,013 males and 309 females. During the year 59 certificates have been issued to young persons under sixteen years of age—viz., 38 males and 21 females—an increase of 24 on last year.

ACCIDENTS.

During the year only two accidents were reported—one of a slight nature, the other, I am sorry to say, proved fatal; a carpenter fell from a scaffold and eventually succumbed to his injuries.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

I find a little difficulty in working this Act with hotel-assistants, but with the majority of shopkeepers I have little or no trouble. If there were one uniform day for closing all shops (including shops not in boroughs or cities), and all assistants, including hotel-assistants, were to have their half-holiday on that particular day, Inspectors would then be able to cope more fully with this work.