

1907.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

(REPORT OF THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The SECRETARY, Department of Labour, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF LABOUR.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 2nd June, 1907.

I have the honour to present herewith the sixteenth annual report of this Department for transmission to His Excellency the Governor, in accordance with section 65 of "The Factories Act, 1901," and section 12 of "The Labour Department Act, 1903." The report covers the late financial year—viz., from the 1st April, 1906, to the 31st March, 1907.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD TREGGAR,

Secretary.

The Hon. J. A. Millar, Minister of Labour.

It is with the deepest regret that I have, on behalf of the Department, to record the death, on the 10th June, 1906, of the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, Minister of Labour.

The past year, reckoned from the 1st April, 1906, to the 31st March, 1907, has been notable for exceptional prosperity in the labour world of this colony. It has been a period in which unusually fine weather was experienced in spring and summer, this allowing men (especially at out-of-doors employment) to work more regularly and continuously than for a long time past. Indeed, in the South Island the dry weather almost took the form of drought, causing the feed on many of the runs and farms to become scarce; but in the North this was by no means the case, and the increase in both the bulk and value of the exports certifies the general advance of prosperity in agricultural and pastoral industries. The exports were above those of the previous year, and by their steady rise indicate that the small population of the colony is composed of men and women who have reason to be proud of such a record of their ability and industry.

The skilled trades have in few cases had reason to complain, while the great number have cause to be satisfied with the steadiness and fullness of engagements. Those connected with the building trades—carpenters, painters, bricklayers, plumbers, &c.—have in most of the cities and towns been very busily engaged, particularly in Wellington, Christchurch, Invercargill, Nelson, Napier, Palmerston North, Blenheim, and Whangarei. In Wellington and Dunedin the engineering and iron trades were slack, but in other places, notably in the smaller towns, such as New Plymouth and Napier, they were very brisk. The clothing trade in Dunedin could not obtain all the hands required, and the same difficulty obtained in Napier, there being a shortage of tailors everywhere, and generally of female machinists. Boot and shoe manufacture was good—even brisk compared with the business of ten years ago—able hands being hard to get in the South the first half of the year, while machinists and finishers were scarce in Wellington. Woollen-mills were unequal: