

looking for light work. Eighty-one persons made application for employment: 47 were sent to Government co-operative works and 16 to private employment. These had 41 others depending upon them.

FACTORIES.

There were 171 certificates of registration issued from this office during the year, an increase of 7 factories over last year.

The number employed has been 17 males under sixteen; 19 females under sixteen; 1,136 males over sixteen; 237 females over sixteen: or a total of 1,409 hands, 277 over last year.

Certificates of fitness have been issued to 12 males under sixteen, and 25 females under sixteen, during the year.

Overtime warrants have been issued to 17 workrooms for 179 females and boys under sixteen to work 5,059 hours. Adult males, principally tailors and engineers, have worked 15,396 hours. The total number of hours overtime worked was 20,455.

Eleven accidents have been reported during the year, but none of them were of a very serious nature. In no case was the accident due to any negligence on the part of the employer.

There were four prosecutions under the Act during the year, and in each case conviction was recorded and fine inflicted.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

There has been no friction in the working of this Act during the year, although several warnings have had to be given to shopkeepers who have erred through ignorance. During the year 103 males worked 1,165 hours overtime, and 52 females 281 hours.

There were five prosecutions under this Act.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

Sixteen cases under this Act came before the Arbitration Court at the November sitting. Fifteen breaches were recorded, and convictions were obtained in 14 cases. One case was dismissed. There are also 14 cases awaiting the decision of the Court.

The general defence of the employers is ignorance of the law, but now that the Department is supplying each employer concerned with a copy of the award which concerns him, it is to be hoped that a little more care will be exercised.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES.

There are two registry offices licensed, both of which are satisfactorily conducted.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION.

The Shearers' Accommodation Act is observed in a satisfactory manner at all the shearing-sheds in this district. Only in one instance has there been any occasion to remark on defects, and here notice has been given to the occupier to provide the accommodation necessary.

In almost every instance difficulty has been found in procuring the services of Europeans to shear, and consequently the work has been done by Natives and half-castes. Although the accommodation provided has been according to the requirements of the Act, it has not been taken advantage of, the shearers preferring to sleep in their own tents or out in the open.

In dealing with shearing-sheds I would like to point out one matter which, to my mind, is of importance. It is necessary that the Inspector should pay his annual visit to each shed while the shearing is on, as it is only then that he can see what accommodation is required. But, as no notification reaches the Department as to when the shearing commences, the Inspector often has to travel long distances and visit the shed more than once in order to see the men at work. Often when he reaches a shed he finds it not working—shearing has either not commenced or it has just finished. And these visits mean both loss of time and expense, which can ill be spared. Then, again, there are constant changes in the location of the sheds, and new sheds are erected, and there is difficulty in tracing them. I would respectfully suggest that some clause be inserted in the Act whereby all occupiers of shearing-sheds shall be compelled to register their sheds or notify the Inspector when they commence shearing-operations.

CONCLUSION.

I have found the factories, shops, and offices throughout this district to be clean and comfortable, and well ventilated, and there seems to be a general desire on the part of all employers to keep within the bounds of the various Acts concerned, and to study the health and interests of their employees.

The outlook for the current year is very hopeful. Trade seems brisk all round and, judging by the way in which capital is being invested in new buildings, there is every anticipation of a prosperous year as far as Napier is concerned. It is to be regretted though that more is not being invested in house-property. The carriers here have furniture stocked everywhere belonging to people who cannot get houses, and one house-agent told me only this week that he had forty-two people on his books, most of them new-comers from Home, looking for houses. Under such conditions it will not be wondered at that rents are getting even higher in Napier than at Wellington.

In conclusion, during the time I have been in charge of the Napier branch I have received courteous treatment from the whole of the people with whom I have come in contact, and I desire to record my appreciation.

I also desire to thank yourself and the headquarters staff for the kindly consideration I have received at your hands in carrying out my various duties.

I have, &c.,

W. J. CULVER,

Inspector of Factories,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.