

BLENHEIM.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Blenheim, 10th April, 1907.

I have the honour to submit a report of the work of this office of the Department for the year ending the 31st March, 1907.

GENERAL.

It is very pleasing to note that the year just closed has been one of general prosperity; the progress of the town has been quite remarkable; quite a number of good and substantial buildings have been erected; joiners, carpenters, plumbers, and painters have had quite a busy and successful year. The engineering, blacksmithing, and coachbuilding trades have also had a very full year.

The flax-mills had a very active year, and the long spell of dry fine weather has contributed very much to the success of this industry, enabling the mill hands to make good time. There are eight flax-mills at work in this district, employing a considerable number of hands. Considerable anxiety was felt at the beginning of the year in consequence of the continued dry weather, the farming community fearing that it would prove disastrous to their crops. They, however, had a good average harvest, with good prices for their products. The pastoralists on the higher country suffered somewhat from the drought during the spring and summer months, and in many instances had to reduce their stocks in consequence of the scarcity of feed; later rains, however, brought on the grass, so that, speaking generally, agriculturists and pastoralists had a fairly prosperous year.

UNSKILLED LABOUR.

There has been a good demand for this class of labour, and very few applicants; a good many strangers who have recently come to this district found immediate employment, and the labour-market is still in a very healthy condition.

FATORIES ACT.

Eighty-two factories have been registered, employing 429 operatives—namely, 392 males and 37 females.

Twenty females have worked 414 hours overtime, and 147 males worked 2,890 hours overtime during the year.

Two certificates under section 26 have been issued to males and 1 to a female under sixteen years of age.

This Act works satisfactorily; there appears to be a general desire by employers and employees to comply with the requirements of the law.

There was only one prosecution under the Act.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The provisions of this Act are well observed, and no difficulties of a serious nature have been experienced in its administration, although there were two convictions against one storekeeper. There are 79 shops doing business in this district.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

The accommodation for shearers is, on the whole, very good. In one or two instances notices have been issued to owners to improve the present accommodation, which I have no doubt will be completed before the next season.

I have, &c.,

WM. SOUTHGATE,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Nelson, 9th April, 1907.

I have the honour to forward for your information my annual report upon the working of the various Acts for the year ending the 31st March, 1907.

In reviewing the conditions of trade and industry, it is pleasing to note that the year has been a prosperous one. The various trades throughout the district have been kept busy, very little time being lost by employees.

The building trade in all branches has been very brisk during the year, many old buildings in the city being removed and their place taken by substantial brick structures. The approximate number of new buildings erected during the year is 70; approximate value, £48,724.

The same state of trade may be said to apply to all manufacturing industries—their condition has been satisfactory; this is shown by the steady increase in the number of factories registered.

Unskilled labour: This branch of the Department's work has steadily increased, employers and employees alike making full use of the advantages offered them by the Department; and although there have been a fair number of new arrivals from England and other places, yet no great difficulty has been experienced in finding employment for them, 135 men, having 95 persons dependant on them, having been found employment.

I may here state that the prospects for the coming year are good, fair prices being obtained at the present time for the products of the district.