

## EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

During the year 242 persons applied for employment, out of which 142 were placed on co-operative works and with private employers.

During the months of January and February a number of flax-mills were, owing to the low price of hemp, closed down. This had the effect of flooding the town with labour. Most of the unemployed, however, found ready employment—a number through this Department and through registry offices. Private employers do not avail themselves of the facilities afforded by the Department in providing labour for them as fully as one would like. The reasons for this are that few are aware that the Department undertakes this duty. I would respectfully urge that steps be taken to remedy this, either through the Press or by circular to each employer of labour.

In conclusion, I desire to again thank all those whom I have met in the execution of my duties for the invariable courtesy extended to me. I also thank my assistant for the able manner in which he carried out his duties during the past year.

I have, &c.,

J. HOLLOWES,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.

## WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wanganui, 10th April, 1908.

I have the honour to forward, for your consideration, the following report of the work of this office for the year ending 31st March, 1908 :—

The period under consideration has been one of exceptional prosperity. The activity in the building trades created a demand for skilled labour that could not be supplied, and this has retarded building operations to a considerable extent. There are not sufficient houses to meet the requirements of the influx of population, and married men are thereby prevented from coming here, while others are compelled to leave the district. Very few houses suitable for workers' dwellings are being built, and anything that might be done in that direction would prove a blessing to the workers.

Skilled labour of all kinds has been in demand. Carriage-building in all branches has been busy. The furniture trade, tailoring, boot making and repairing, bicycle and motor building and repairing, printing and bookbinding, dressmaking, millinery, and tailoring have been busy, and much overtime has been worked.

Although there was a very large demand for unskilled labour, it has been supplied, and a large number of men have been sent to public works. A pleasant feature in this connection is that employers have assisted the Department by applying at this office for labour.

To meet the increasing work of the Department new offices have been secured and fitted up for the convenience of the public, and occupiers of factories and shops are giving their earnest attention to the labour laws through the extracts from the Acts and circulars distributed by the Department. Attention is being paid to the lighting, ventilation, and sanitation of factories and shops. All the new buildings are exceptionally good in these respects, and many of the old buildings are to be rebuilt shortly, owing to the expiration of the leases. Meanwhile the requirements of the Act are being strictly observed, and no difficulty is experienced in having this done, as employers recognise that it is to their own benefit to have clean, healthy workrooms and factories for the workers.

## FACTORIES ACT.

This Act is working smoothly. For the year, 218 factories have been registered, employing 1,469 operatives, of whom 1,107 were males and 362 females, an increase of 33 factories and 235 workers over last year.

Overtime warrants were issued to 26 employers, and 208 women and 15 boys worked 3,786 hours overtime.

Three hundred and eighty-nine males over the age of sixteen years have worked 21,122 hours overtime.

There were 8 prosecutions and convictions for breaches of the Act.

Fifty-seven certificates of fitness have been issued to young persons under sixteen years of age, of whom 27 were males and 30 females.

Twenty-two accidents have been reported during the year; none of them were of a very serious nature.

The number of accidents in woodworking factories could be considerably reduced if machinists were compelled to fasten small jobs to a board, with handles fixed well back from the cutters, while feeding the shaping-machine or "buzzer." This machine is very dangerous, and many accidents arise from it. In nearly every instance these accidents occur when small jobs are being done, owing to the machinists' hands being close to the cutters. Although this machine may be well guarded for running mouldings and similar work, some protection is needed when small miscellaneous jobs are being done. In cases where the ordinary metal guards cannot be used, the method referred to above is the safest known.

## SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

As this Act is now amended, it is giving satisfaction to all concerned. There is very little difficulty in enforcing its provisions. Hotelkeepers have in nearly every instance immediately complied with the Act on receiving notice of the amendment making a half-holiday compulsory for all hotel servants.

Chemists and hairdressers and tobacconists only close by requisition from a majority of the shopkeepers fixing the closing-hours.