

There are 240 shops in this district, giving employment to 668 persons, 432 of whom are males and 236 are females, showing an increase of 125 shops and an increase of 180 male and 44 female employees.

Overtime warrants were issued to 24 employers, and 151 males and 94 females worked 3,450 hours overtime.

Twenty-six prosecutions were brought before the Court, in which 24 convictions were recorded and 2 cases were dismissed.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Four licenses were issued, and no trouble has been experienced in enforcing the provisions of the Act. The new scale of fees is being strictly adhered to, and satisfaction is expressed with the scale for workers.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The Court held three sittings in Wanganui, and 30 cases were disposed of, 19 convictions were recorded, 4 cases withdrawn, and 7 dismissed, 38 cases were settled without going to Court, while many were investigated and the complaints found to be groundless.

In conclusion, I wish to express appreciation of the courtesy and consideration shown by employers and workers alike on every occasion when inquiries have been made in the course of my duties during an extremely busy season.

I have, &c.,

W. HOOD,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

HAWERA.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Hawera, 31st March, 1908.

I have the honour to submit my annual report upon the working of the Factories and Shops and Offices Acts during the year ended 31st March, 1908.

There were 103 factories registered, employing 320 males and 81 females, as against 102 factories and workrooms registered the previous year, employing 323 males and 69 females. There were 79 shops registered, as against 76 the previous year. There were 9 permits granted to young persons to work in factories, and 646 hours overtime were worked by females at tailoring and dressmaking. There were 5 accidents, none of a serious nature. Five prosecutions were instituted for breaches of the Shops and Offices Act. The building trade has been very brisk. Dairying has been in a flourishing state till the past two months, when the supply of milk fell off, owing to the drought. Milking-machines are being installed on several dairy farms; men for milking could not be obtained, though wages from £1 10s. to £2 per week and found were offered. Labourers were scarce, although 9s. and 10s. per diem was given. Harvest hands were getting from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. per hour. Bushmen have also been very difficult to get. The district generally has been in a flourishing state, and numbers of new settlers have come here recently.

I have, &c.,

J. S. BERNARD,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, New Plymouth, 10th April, 1908.

I have the honour to submit, for your consideration, the annual report of this office for the year ending 31st March, 1908.

TRADES.

During the period under review trade has been very satisfactory. In a number of trades—notably tailoring, dressmaking, and boot-manufacturing—it has been quite impossible to obtain sufficient hands to meet requirements. Thus, although the year just ended has been eminently satisfactory from the point of view of demand, the supply would have been greater if it had been possible to obtain sufficient suitable labour.

The dairying industry (the most important in this district) made a good start, and was progressing in such a satisfactory manner, until checked by the long spell of dry weather, that there was every prospect of eclipsing all previous records in quantity of output. Unfortunately, expectations as to quantity have not been realised. The high prices obtained at the latter part of the year has, however, been some compensation for the restricted output of butter. The number of cheese and dairy factories is rapidly increasing; there are at present 60 butter-factories and creameries, 30 cheese-factories, and 305 private dairies employed in making butter. These factories, with very few exceptions, are well built, have concrete floors, and are equipped with modern machinery and appliances. The machinery and appliances are kept clean and bright, and the employees will bear very favourable comparison in intelligence, physique, and cleanliness with any other body of workers employed in any other industry in the Dominion.