

the usual few hangers-on who will not leave town, and prefer to wait for the odd jobs in or about the city to steady work in the country. These are hard cases to deal with, and are usually to the fore when there are signs of agitation. Altogether 1,732 men were assisted to employment in the North Canterbury district. Of these, 509 were married men, with 938 dependents. Of the men assisted 488 were sent to private employment, and 1,244 to Government works.

#### WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

The inauguration of the Women's Employment Branch has had a very beneficial effect, and has filled a long-felt want; and, although at first employers and employees were a little slow to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Department, the good results soon became known, and employers and servants realised that the Government department had all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of the private registry-offices. Great care has been exercised in selecting only really good reliable girls, and this practice has been fully recognised by many employers, who now depend solely on the Department for obtaining servants. Unfortunately, the supply of servants is not nearly equal to the demand, but during the nine months this branch has been open some 605 domestics have been found employment. A separate report is furnished by Mrs. Mitchell, the officer in charge of that branch.

#### FACTORIES ACT.

Very little difficulty has been experienced in administering this Act, occupiers generally accepting any requisition for improvements in a good spirit, realising that the interests of the factory-workers are to a great extent bound up with their own.

Great changes have taken place in respect to some businesses, and the tendency of factory-owners is to endeavour to enlarge their premises to enable the whole of their workers to be brought under the one roof. Several fine factory premises have been completed during the year—these factories it is said will compare favourably with any in the Southern Hemisphere. The ventilation, lighting, sanitary, and heating arrangements are quite up to date, due regard being made to the necessary air-space; well-lighted dining-rooms, and hot-water heating-arrangements have also been provided for: one large factory even provides separate porcelain baths, with hot and cold water, for the use of their male and female employees. Of course, there are still a number of old factory premises in occupation that are not very desirable places to work in, for various reasons, some occupiers being loth to launch out in extensions, probably thinking trade hardly warrants the outlay at present. Due attention has been given to such factories in regard to air-space, ventilation, and sanitary arrangements.

The law in respect to the payment of wages has been fairly well complied with without the intervention of the Department. In a few cases occupiers had failed to pay for Saturday half-holiday, or to increase wages at the proper time, or had made deductions from employees' wages for goods damaged, or had accepted a premium for teaching a youth his trade. In most of these cases, when the breach was not found to be wilful, a settlement has been effected by the payment of the amount due, the sum of £68 7s. being paid over to the workers interested.

During the year 1,259 factories were registered, which have given employment to 11,554 persons—viz., 8,016 males and 3,538 females, including employers. Included in the above registrations are 21 Chinese laundries.

*Permits* to work in factories were granted under section 28 to 535 young persons—viz., 262 to boys and 273 to girls, under the age of sixteen years.

*Overtime*.—During the year 2,784 boys under sixteen years of age and women worked 68,496 hours overtime, and 1,366 males over sixteen years of age worked 91,675 hours, making a total of 160,172 hours overtime worked by 4,150 workers.

*Prosecutions*.—Nine prosecutions were taken under this Act, for the following offences: 1 for occupying unregistered premises, 2 for failing to pay overtime, 2 for employing boys under sixteen years of age without first obtaining a certificate of fitness, 3 for failing to pay wages at not longer than fortnightly intervals, and one for accepting £50 as premium to teach a boy the engineering trade. Convictions were obtained in 8 cases; 1 case of accepting a premium was dismissed on account of the information not being laid within two months of the payment of the premium. The Magistrate remarked that section 61, limiting the time for commencing proceedings, should really not apply to such cases. The employer gave the Court an assurance that the premium would be at once refunded. One other case was also dismissed by the Magistrate, but on an appeal being taken to the Supreme Court the appeal was upheld, with £5 5s. costs.

*Accidents*.—During the year there were 135 accidents in factories, fortunately none of a serious nature. Inquiries were made in every case, with a view to ascertaining the cause of accidents, and also with a view to providing a remedy, if possible, to prevent accidents in future. Very few safeguards were recommended, as nearly the whole of the accidents were caused through workers misjudging distances; leaving their fingers under stamping, nipping, stitching, or punching machines; putting them too close to planing-machines, circular-saws, &c., and getting their fingers lacerated or crushed; several strained themselves by lifting heavy material, and a number had their feet crushed or bruised through heavy material falling on them. [The most serious cases are reported elsewhere in this report (see "Accidents").]

#### SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

I am pleased to say that this Act is looked upon favourably by many employers as well as the shop-assistants, and, except in respect to the controversy as to which is the most suitable day of the week for the half-holiday, seems to give general satisfaction. Advantage is being taken of the pro-