

GENERAL.

In consequence of the expansion of the Department, the office-work has considerably increased, necessitating a considerable amount of overtime being worked by the office staff.

The correspondence shows a decided increase—4,841 letters, 7,784 circulars, and 462 telegrams being sent out from this office.

Before concluding my report, I wish to express my best thanks and appreciation to the officers of the District Health Department and to the officers of the City Council for the very great assistance rendered in respect to the sanitation of factory and shop premises, and also to the officers of my own staff for the valuable assistance rendered in carrying out the work of the Department during a year when stress of work required a certain amount of overtime.

I have, &c.,

W. H. HAGGER,

Inspector in Charge.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

DUNEDIN.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Dunedin, 16th April, 1909.

I have the honour to submit herewith, for your consideration, the annual report for this district for the year ending 31st March, 1909. Part of this time—until the end of January—it was under the jurisdiction of my predecessor, Mr. P. Hally.

GENERAL.

Although the year just ended has been the first for some time in which a check has been apparent in the state of prosperity which had been so well sustained throughout the Dominion, it is gratifying to have to record that any falling-off from this position has not been very marked in this district. Indiscriminate speculation in real estate, which has been evident in some parts of the Dominion, does not appear to have obtained here. This restriction to legitimate business has had its good results, and the stringency of the money-market has not had the effect which would otherwise have taken place. A consequence of this is that the usual progress of works and improvements in this city has not been hampered, and workers have accordingly been fairly constantly employed throughout the year.

It can therefore be safely said that the year, in respect to labour generally, has been a satisfactory one. Confirmation of this is at once shown by there having been no great dearth of employment for workers, besides the fact that considerable overtime has been worked during the year.

Agricultural operations have been extensive, and, notwithstanding the heavy snowfall experienced, stock conditions were also very satisfactory. In the coal-mines in the district employment has been fairly regular. The closing of one mine owing to prevalence of firedamp for a time rendered a number of workers idle; yet, withal, labour conditions in the past year generally compare more than favourably with those of the previous one.

Right through to the last quarter of the year a considerable amount of building has gone on, although, owing principally to the influx of tradesmen from other centres, employment for carpenters has not been constant. Painting has also been intermittent, and at times numbers of men have been idle. A number of substantial brick buildings have been erected, and a large amount of repair and improvement work has been done. There is a fair amount of work still in progress, but future prospects are not of the brightest. Bricklayers and plasterers have been well employed; but, as the more important contracts have been completed, the trade in their branches has been quiet for the latter portion of the year. The plumbing trade has been busy, due to the extension of the water-supply to suburban districts, and to sewerage connections.

There has not been very much employment offering for stonemasons.

The printing trade has been sluggish during the whole year, and employers have found extreme difficulty in keeping their regular hands employed.

Joinery mills and employees connected therewith have experienced fairly normal business throughout.

Depression has been somewhat marked in the engineering and iron trades, and business has been very spasmodic, and chiefly confined to repair work. It is understood that orders are coming forward for ferry-steamers, which, with other possible contracts, it is to be hoped will raise the state of trade to a much better tone.

Clothing-manufacturing and woollen-milling have experienced a satisfactory year, and the output has been fully equal to that of the previous period. Boot-manufacturers state that the fortunate revival of business which occurred some few years back has been well maintained during the past year, and future prospects are good.

Tailoring and dressmaking have had fairly steady trade.

For unskilled labour there has been a considerable amount of employment; and during the year all capable and willing men have been able to find work. Besides the ordinary avenues of employment, a good many workers were sent to private contracts in country districts; and the Government works in progress were mainly on the Mosgiel-Dunedin Railway duplication, the Gore-Waikaka, the Riversdale-Switzers, and the Catlins River-Waimahaka Railway works. During the year 3,342 applications were entered in our employment-book. In all 1,249 men were assisted to work. Of these, 877 were single men, and 372 married with 1,362 dependents. The usefulness of this branch of the Department is shown by these figures, and it should be noted that no less than 793 of those assisted were sent to private employment. The balance (456) went to Government works.

Those assisted include all classes of tradesmen, as well as farm hands and labourers.