

Most of the trades in the borough have taken advantage of the clause allowing the majority of shopkeepers to fix their own closing-hours, and the requisition has been well observed, although I have had to caution a few tradesmen eager to catch the last possible customer on a Saturday night.

I think it would be a decided improvement in the Act if shopkeepers were compelled to keep over-time-books. Under present conditions, where an employer is allowed (as with hairdressers' assistants) a scope of twelve hours in which the assistant may be employed nine hours, it is a most difficult matter to detect offences, and it is usually after an employee has left his employer that we find excessive hours have been worked, the matter being reported in a spirit of revenge; whereas, were the Act brought into line with the Factories Act in regard to time and wage book, I am sure this offence would practically disappear.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are 6 offices in this district, and all have been well conducted.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

I have had a very busy time during the season inspecting the various stations in the district to see if the improvements ordered by the Department had been carried out, and in almost every instance I found that stationholders recognised their responsibility, with the result that new accommodation has been erected on a great many stations. In other cases, owing to the bad state of the roads, the time for completion has been extended by the Department, and I believe that by next season shearers will be well provided for in this respect. Two stationholders were proceeded against for failing to comply with the terms of notice *re* improvements. In one case the proceedings were withdrawn, as the owner undertook to have the terms of the requisition complied with at once; and in the other the owner was ordered to have the accommodation erected within thirty days, and to pay the costs of the Department.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

There have been a number of prosecutions during the year for breaches of awards, &c., and these no doubt have had a good effect, as very few complaints are now received as to awards not being obeyed.

The Amendment Act has been well received by employee and employer alike, and it is certainly an improvement to have alleged offences disposed of promptly.

Before concluding, I desire to record my appreciation of the courteous treatment received from those with whom I have come in contact in my official capacity.

I have, &c.,

D. CARMODY,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

NAPIER.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Napier, 20th April, 1909.

I have the honour to submit, for your consideration, my annual report of the work of the Department in the Napier district for the year ending the 31st March, 1909.

GENERAL.

It is pleasing to report that, in comparison with the rest of the Dominion, the year just ended has been one of general prosperity in this district, and, although the money-market has been tight, there is reason for congratulation for the volume of business done.

The building trades have not been so busy as during the previous year, as the following figures will show. The Borough Council granted permits for building to the total value of £67,088 for the year, as against £77,874 for the previous year. Notwithstanding the reduction, some fine shops have been erected, and substantial alterations made to many of the factories, which have been the means of providing improvements to the buildings, more especially in regard to ventilation and sanitary matters.

It is also pleasing to state that the Hawke's Bay district is still progressing. During the year the Lands Department have opened up several estates for settlement, with the result that there are now 1,511 selectors, holding 881,882 acres of land, or an increase of 164 selectors, with an area of 54,428 acres. The Government have also just about completed (for closer settlement) the purchase of a large estate at Tangoio. This method of settling people on the land will add greatly to the expanding of our industries, and so, indirectly, give employment to a large number of workers.

During the year the cabinetmaking trade has been very quiet, and at the present time it shows no signs of improvement.

The engineering trade has had a very busy year, one firm alone working about 17,000 hours in overtime; and this same firm had to enlarge the factory to provide more room to carry out its contracts.

The leather trade has also had a fairly good run, and, while not so good as last year, the men were kept on full time with a little overtime.

FACTORIES.

The increase of factories for the period has been very satisfactory, there being 255 registered for the year, an increase of 25 over last year, employing 1,736 persons—viz., 1,434 males and 302 females—an increase of 50 persons for the period.

During the year 33 certificates of fitness have been issued to young persons—viz., 11 males and 22 females.