

PROSECUTIONS UNDER FACTORIES, SHOPS, INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION, AND OTHER ACTS, AND CASES SETTLED OUT OF COURT.

Every effort is always made to induce employers to observe the conditions of the various Acts and awards, and no case has been recommended for proceedings in Court where it has been felt that the employer had acted in ignorance. In many cases of breaches it was deemed sufficient to send registered letters of warning, and 61 of these were posted during the year. No further action was required beyond seeing that any arrears of wages due were paid up. The total amount thus recovered was £31 10s. 10d., besides another £26 18s. which was not dealt with in time for this report. There has also been a number of complaints which on being investigated were found to be unsubstantiated.

Under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 32 cases were taken before the Court, and 31 breaches were recorded, £28 15s. being imposed as penalties, with £3 14s. costs. One case was dismissed.

Under the Shops and Offices and Factories Acts 13 cases were taken. Three were dismissed and 10 convictions were obtained, with £6 11s. fines imposed, with £4 8s. costs.

Generally speaking, the labour laws have worked without friction throughout this district.

INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS.

The wage-sheet returns asked for by the Department, this being census year, when specially full information is desired, were at first thought by some employers to be too inquisitorial; but on finding that the filling-in of the form was very simple, and caused little extra trouble, the objectors appeared to be satisfied that there was no cause for complaint.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are 6 servants' registry offices licensed at Palmerston North, against 4 in 1909-10. With one exception they have been well conducted. I would again respectfully urge that all license-holders should be made directly responsible to the workers they engage. Often a worker pays his fee, and is sent to an "alleged" job, which he subsequently finds does not exist. In some cases I have obtained a refund of fees and fares paid, but even then there has been a loss of time suffered by the worker in going to and from the expected work which he has not been compensated for.

CONCLUSION.

During the year I have visited Ashhurst, Feilding, Foxton, Levin, Rongotea, Otaki, Shannon, Tiritea, Woodville, Whitanui, Waituna West, and Halcombe. To the police officers at each of these places I desire to extend my thanks for the assistance they have so willingly rendered me at all times in carrying out my duties.

I have paid regular visits to the factories and shops in Palmerston North, and also to many other employers of labour, especially those working under awards, from whom I have received every courtesy and consideration. I have again to thank the secretary of the local Employers' Association and the secretaries of several local unions of employees for their assistance in settling disputes.

The number of letters, &c., of outward correspondence during the year reached 3,722.

I have, &c.,

W. J. CULVER,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.

MASTERTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Masterton, 21st April, 1911.

I have the honour to submit herewith for your consideration the annual report on the work of the Department in the Masterton district for the year ended 31st March, 1911.

Taking the whole period under review into consideration, trade and business generally may be said to have maintained a fair level. Although several business premises have ceased operations during the year, others have been established, so that generally the variation has not been great. Several trades have not shown any marked improvement, although almost all workers have been steadily employed.

Building trades, which are usually a fair indicator as regards prosperity and progress, have been well sustained. The new freezing-works of the Wellington Farmers' Meat Company (Limited), situated at Waingawa, commenced operations during the early part of last year, the buildings and machinery equipment costing, approximately, £40,000. The buildings and fitting-up of these "works" caused a considerable amount of steady employment for tradesmen and others throughout the year, and since the works have been completed upwards of 200 hands have been employed in the meat-freezing and fellmongering industry.

Within the borough 38 permits in accordance with the by-laws have been issued to contractors for buildings, estimated to cost, approximately, £12,000. Several residences have been erected throughout the district in the vicinity of Masterton, and a considerable number of building tradesmen was also engaged for several months on the new Solway Showgrounds, grandstand, stock buildings, and yards, so that taken all round very few tradesmen have been unemployed during the year.