

MEN'S EMPLOYMENT BRANCH.

During the year there has been a fair demand for unskilled labour, chiefly for farm-work and bushfelling, consequently there has not been the same number of men calling at the office in search of employment, and little difficulty has been experienced in placing those willing to take country work. It is pleasing to note that the back country is being taken up freely, and pastoral and agricultural operations are being more extensively carried on. The fruit industry, which is becoming of great importance to the district, has given employment to a considerable number of hands for clearing and planting orchards on new ground. It is estimated that 30,000 trees have been planted during the season.

In the city proper there have been very few contracts of any importance requiring unskilled labour; still, all local men have been kept well employed, and those working on the wharf have also experienced a fair year.

There has been a decided increase in the exports and imports during the year. Vessels to the number of 1,640, with a tonnage of 407,250 tons, have visited the port. This number includes eight ocean-going steamers.

During the year 154 men were assisted to employment.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BRANCH.

This branch is gradually becoming better known to both employers and employees, and the facilities offered have been taken full advantage of. The upkeep of the branch entails a considerable amount of extra work, and the number of applications for workers is far in excess of the number of applicants for work. (For further particulars see Miss Emerson's report.)

CONCLUSION.

During the year various matters in connection with awards, factories, and other Acts have required visits to other parts of the Nelson and Marlborough Districts—viz., Motueka, Takaka, Canvastown, Havelock, Carlisle, Blenheim, Tuamarina, and Picton.

I wish to record my appreciation of assistance rendered me by officers of other departments, and also by local Inspectors and police officers with whom I have come in contact.

I have, &c.,

S. TYSON,

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

Inspector of Factories.

GREYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Greymouth, 10th April, 1911.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1911.

GENERAL.

Trade generally has been of a somewhat varied and fluctuating character. The very wet winter experienced had a most marked effect on all outdoor industries, especially building operations, causing a great amount of broken time, and, as a natural sequence, the decreased spending-power of the large proportion of workers affected thereby was felt very keenly by the trading community. A revival took place, however, in the spring, and both from an employer's and employee's point of view the year compares very favourably with former periods, and the present year opens with fair prospects. It is true that there are no signs of an approaching boom, but it is apparent that there is a firmness about local trade, and the workman speaks of the prospect of his employment in cheerful tones. With the exception perhaps of the coal industry, an all-round improvement has been noticeable during the last few months, and there is every prospect of this being maintained for some considerable period.

It is pleasing to report a decided improvement in the sawmilling industry, the depression of the past two years having lifted, and large orders for both white and red pine for Australia have placed this industry in a very flourishing condition. The total amount of timber exported during the period was 42,620,206 superficial feet, which is an increase of 12,158,816 superficial feet over the previous year. The large area of bush that must have been felled to produce the same emphasizes the need for some system of afforestation to protect this industry in the future. Well-known authorities estimate that on an average 1 acre of bush yields 10,000 superficial feet of sawn timber, which means that considerably over 4,000 acres of bush has been felled during the past year in the Greymouth district.

The coal-mining industry has fluctuated during the period. Although the returns prove that more coal has been exported this year than last, the figures for the year ending 31st March, 1910, being 360,817 tons, and for the year ending 31st March, 1911, 397,080 tons, the increase can be partly accounted for by the increase of orders caused by the strike at Newcastle in the early part of the period. At present, however, the industry is experiencing considerable slackness.

The other staple industry of the district—viz., quartz-mining—which hitherto has been dull, has shown distinct signs of reviving during the past six months. New reefs in various parts have been opened out, and work is extending to the low-level reefs. This activity is causing satisfaction on the West Coast, of which mining in all its branches is the mainstay.

Throughout the year skilled trades, particularly those entailing indoor work, have been kept busy. During the year 223 building permits for residences and eight for shops and warehouses were issued by the Borough Engineer. There is a continual demand for increased dwelling-accommodation.