

## CONCLUSION.

I cannot close this report without testifying to the excellent manner in which I have been assisted by the members of the local staff. One and all have worked admirably in the interests of the Department, and I would be wanting in my duty were I not to take this opportunity to thank them. We have had a very busy and trying year, caused very largely by our being required to collect so much statistical matter in connection with the industrial census.

In conclusion, I have to thank all others with whom my duties have brought me into contact for their uniform courtesy and kindness.

I have, &c.,

JAMES SHANAGHAN.

Inspector of Factories.

The Secretary of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

## WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 15th April, 1912.

I have the honour to submit for your consideration my report of the working of the Factories, Shops and Offices, &c., Acts in Wellington City during the year ended 31st March, 1912.

## GENERAL.

Conditions of employment throughout the year have been very favourable. It must be said, however, that this fortunate state has not been occasioned by any extra amount of work offering in the district, but rather by many of our workers being engaged in other places where trade has boomed, chiefly Sydney, Melbourne, and Auckland, simply relieving us of any congestion of unemployment. Reports from retailers have not been enthusiastic. Drapers, clothiers, boot and provision dealers have had a fair year, but shopkeepers dealing in goods other than the necessities of life complain that trade has been somewhat depressed. One reason put forward is the enormous patronage now given to the large number of picture theatres. Another is the high price ruling for provisions, which naturally decreases the spending-power on outside lines.

Manufacturers generally have had a very busy year, particularly in the clothing, shirt, tailoring, dressmaking, and woollen-milling factories. The shortage of female and boy labour is still acute, and has considerably retarded business in these industries.

The boot trade slackened during the latter half of the year, and in the engineering and saw-milling industries business has been only moderate. Beyond these, however, the manufacturing industries have had a successful year.

*Building Trades.*—The only large contracts have been the General Post Office and the Children's Hospital; and the statistics of the City Building Superintendent show the total value of building-work for which permits were issued during the year as £312,988—a decrease of £37,720 on the previous year. Notwithstanding this, trade in all branches has, from an employment view, been steady.

*Woodworking Trades.*—The furniture trade has been very good, a number of factories being handicapped by lack of tradesmen. Boxmaking and coopering have been busy throughout. Saw-milling and sash and door factories have been quiet.

*Leather Trades.*—In boot-factories the excellent business reported in the previous year has received a slight check, but trade has been sufficient to employ all available labour. The scarcity of female machinists still obtains. In saddlery and harnessmaking steady business has been maintained, and full employment has been made.

*Engineering Trades.*—Ironfounding and mechanical engineering have shown little or no improvement, orders being restricted mainly to iron-girder and repair work. Electrical engineering has been quiet in the city, but outside work and contracts have kept business well up to the usual mark.

*Clothing Trades.*—The large orders for the Territorial Forces have greatly increased the work in clothing-factories. The marked shortage of female labour has been a serious handicap to the extension of this industry, and has occasioned considerable overtime being worked. Shirt-factories are in the same plight. Some occupiers state that they have sufficient orders in hand to cover a period of three or four years. As no workers are available, employers are forced in many instances to send work to women who can do it at home, but who cannot work at a factory.

Dressmaking and millinery have had a very satisfactory year. At the time of writing there is a difficulty in securing hands.

Woollen-milling has been at high pressure during the year, and the demand for boys and girls has been unsatisfied.

Printing and bookbinding trades report excellent business, and there has been full employment for all tradesmen.

Coachbuilding trades report a better year than the previous one, but the advance of the motor has made serious inroads on this industry.

The cycle and motor trade has done well in season.

The frozen-meat trade was retarded by a strike, and, although there was a marked activity when the strike ended, the year's returns in this industry will be less than they would otherwise have been.