

CONCLUSION.

The thanks of the Department are again due to the City Council and Inspectors, and also the officers of the Health Department, for their assistance in sanitary matters in or about shops and factory premises. I have also to thank the officers of this Department for their valuable assistance, and their willingness to work considerable overtime in order to cope with the big volume of work dealt with.

I have, &c.,

W. H. HAGGER,

Inspector of Factories.

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

DUNEDIN.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Dunedin, 8th April, 1912.

I beg to submit my report of the work of the Dunedin office of the Department of Labour in respect to the administration of the various labour laws of the Dominion for the year ending 31st March, 1912.

GENERAL.

As regards employment, I am pleased to be able to state that the satisfactory condition as outlined in my last annual report has been fully maintained, and in nearly every branch of skilled labour employment has been very steady. In the building trades there was some slackness during the winter months, but the major portion of the year has been satisfactory, and a number of large business establishments have been erected. The building licenses taken out in the district number 666, to the value of £238,694, and amongst these there have been about 150 new business premises. The iron trades have experienced a fair year, while agricultural-implement manufacturing and electrical engineering have been busy during the whole period. The furniture trades have had a good turnover, and at times difficulty has been experienced in coping with orders. In the clothing trades a very large amount of overtime—in many cases up to the limit allowed by the Act—has been worked in order to supply the demand for clothing. Woollen-milling has been very busy, much more overtime having been worked than in previous years. This also applies to biscuit and confectionery manufacturing, and in these industries there is a continual demand by employers for more women workers. It is claimed by employers (who advance good reasons for their contentions) that the progress of their business has been considerably retarded by the dearth of female labour. As far as unskilled labour is concerned, it may be stated that the year has, on the whole, been a fair one; the position did not become so acute as during last year, but nevertheless during the winter months it seems inevitable that a number of men must suffer the pangs of unemployment. During the spring and summer months there is always a cry for farm workers, but after the harvest is over a number of the men are idle, and come back into town. I would suggest that some consideration be given to this question, with the object of endeavouring to find them suitable employment, and so alleviate this difficulty.

FACORIES ACT.

There has been practically no friction in the administration of this Act during the year. Its provisions are well understood by all concerned, and accepted as being in the best interests of all parties. Employers show every desire to comply with its provisions. All the principal factories throughout the district have been visited, and the improvement in factory premises mentioned in my previous report continues, although there are some workrooms not yet quite up to date. Visits of inspection have also been made to various country towns such as Milton, Balclutha, Clinton, Lawrence, Kaitangata, Queenstown, and Oamaru.

Registration.—There have been 1,156 factories registered, employing 3,565 females and 8,101 males, a total of 11,666 workers.

Overtime.—A total of 85,851 hours' overtime has been worked by women, and boys under sixteen years of age. This is an increase of 13,241 hours on the overtime worked last year. The principal portion of this increase has been in the woollen-milling industry, in which 2,904 hours were worked for period ending 31st March, 1911, and 15,345 hours for 1912. The trades working most overtime were:—

	Women and Boys.	Hours worked.
Clothing-manufacturing and tailoring	572	25,682
Woollen-milling	197	15,345
Biscuit and confectionery	253	12,759
Dressmaking and millinery	440	8,330
Printing and stationery	152	6,979

Permits to Young Persons.—A total of 372 permits have been issued to young persons under sixteen years of age—157 boys and 215 girls. As regards these permits, I have again to reiterate that a number of parents neglect to take full advantage of our educational system, and, as a consequence, many applications for permits have to be refused because the children have not passed the Fourth Standard. An opinion is very prevalent that when a child reaches fourteen years of age a permit to work in a factory can be obtained, and I think more publicity should be given to the fact that unless the child has also passed the Fourth Standard such permit cannot be issued.