

There have been 25 prosecutions under the Act—8 in Napier, 6 in Dannevirke, 10 in Hastings, and 1 in Waipawa. Convictions were recorded in all cases, and penalties inflicted amounting to £48 10s., and costs £10 19s. 2d. The prosecutions were made up as follows: Failing to keep a holiday-book, 4 cases; failing to keep a wages-book, 3 cases; failing to close in accordance with requisition, 7 cases; failing to close on half-holiday, 5 cases; failing to close at 1 p.m. (office), 1 case; working assistants in excess of hours, 5 cases.

In addition to the above, there were 109 letters of warning sent to various shopkeepers. The sum of £18 13s. 3d. was collected from several employers, comprising amounts wrongly deducted from employees, and was handed to the employees entitled to same.

An inspection of offices has also been made, and in several cases alterations had to be made to the sanitary conveniences. The time is fast approaching, in my opinion, when the multifarious exemptions allowed under the Act to occupiers of offices will need curtailing, so as to safeguard the employees engaged therein.

Another matter of vital importance to shopkeepers is the question of prohibiting the sale of goods as a side line when the shops in such businesses are closed by requisition of the majority; there is no logical reason why a person selling jewellery after the shops of jewellers are closed under a requisition should be allowed to do so. Tobacconists are safeguarded in this respect by a special clause in section 25, and the same protection should be extended to other businesses.

Then there is the question of the employment of assistants after 9 p.m. on Saturday nights. The opinion frequently expressed is that a compulsory 9 o'clock closing would be advantageous, and I respectfully submit that these matters should receive the careful consideration of those in authority.

During the year 3,375 hours' overtime was worked.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are 2 registered offices in Napier, and, as far as I can ascertain, both are well conducted.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION, ETC., ACT.

I have been enabled during my first year in the district to visit the majority of the shearing-sheds. In most instances the accommodation is up to the requirements of the Act. There have been 14 notices served upon employers to effect improvements in the accommodation. In addition to this number, there have been several served by police officers acting as Inspectors under the Act.

The difficulty experienced in the administration of this Act is accentuated by the fact that station-owners are loath to provide adequate accommodation, simply on account of the fact that their shearers are members of the Native race. Notwithstanding that it may have been a custom for both sexes of Natives to occupy the same quarters, notices are being issued by your direction requiring separate accommodation to be provided.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

During the period under review there has been a decrease in the number of complaints of alleged breaches received. The total complaints received numbered 136, and were dealt with as follows: 78 were found on investigation to be unsubstantiated; in 39 cases the offences were substantiated, but the circumstances surrounding the breaches were of such a nature that it was decided that letters of warning would suffice; 25 cases were taken before the Court, and in each case a conviction was recorded, with penalties amounting to £48 and costs £4 16s. 10d. The most serious case was that of a firm making "wilfully false" entries in its time and wages book, and a substantial penalty of £10 and costs was imposed.

The industrial unrest which has been so prevalent in other parts of the Dominion has affected this district in a lesser degree—i.e., at Hastings early in the year a disagreement took place between the Labourers' Union and the borough foreman over the question of non-unionists, and consequently the men all ceased work. It was not considered necessary to take action in this case for a breach of the "strike" clauses of the Act, as both parties were somewhat to blame for the cessation of work. The matter was settled to the satisfaction of both parties. The most important dispute arose at the water-front during December over the question of the handling of coal and the contract system, and what looked like a serious industrial upheaval was staved off by the employers agreeing to the men's demands in the interim; it being agreed that the whole matter should be considered at a conference between the parties. This was held during the second week in January. An agreement was arrived at which has removed the cause of contention for at least three years.

The sum of £119 14s. 7d. has been collected from the employers on behalf of the respective employees, and the circumstances of the breaches did not warrant prosecution.

The amicable relationships existing between the representatives of the employers and the various officials of the workers' unions have had the effect of reducing the number of complaints for alleged breaches.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT.

Two meetings of the Board were held in Napier.

Applications were received from eighteen persons for dwellings, but when the applicants came before the Board it was ascertained that three persons desired the land in some other locality than that selected; three were of the opinion that the land was too far from town; one had a section, of which he had paid one-third of the purchase-money; one applicant stated