

The majority of callers are new arrivals from England, who seek advice and information before settling down, and this is perhaps one of the best functions of the labour bureau in disseminating knowledge as to the conditions and prospects in the various avenues of employment. In this way many who have no idea as to the best method of getting to places and where to pursue their inquiries are saved much needless trouble and expense.

#### SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are three offices registered under the Act. The offices are well conducted by capable and qualified persons, and the Act observed, no complaints having been received.

#### FACTORIES ACT.

Two hundred and ninety-five factories have been registered, employing 1,727 operatives—viz., 1,202 males and 525 females—an increase of 17 factories and 140 workers. This increase is indicative of the steady progress made. Four of the new factories registered are for industries new to the district. One hundred and seventy-eight women and boys have worked 4,241 hours' overtime.

Sixty-two certificates of fitness for employment have been issued to persons under sixteen years of age—viz., 32 males and 30 females.

Thirty-six accidents were reported during the year; the most serious was caused by a travelling pulley falling from an overhead rail and striking a worker on the head, fracturing his skull. In no case was any of these accidents traceable to negligence on the part of the employers, and only in one case was it found necessary to confer with the Inspector of Machinery with respect to machinery being properly fenced. In those factories where machinery is used the occupiers have, at my request, affixed a cabinet in a conspicuous place, with appliances for rendering first aid. It is essential that all factories should have such materials handy for use.

Of all the labour laws this Act appears to be best understood by those affected, and, consequently, is responsible for the least friction. Special attention has been paid to the cleanliness and sanitary arrangements of the various factories and work-rooms, and very little trouble has been experienced in getting occupiers to effect improvements when requested to do so. Several new factories have been erected, and in these cases attention has been paid to the convenience and comfort of the employees. As instancing the excellent manner in which the provisions of the Act are carried out, it was not necessary to prosecute in any case of default.

#### SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

This Act requires a great deal of attention at the present time. The number of requisitions from the shopkeepers fixing the hours of closing under section 25 makes it necessary to pay visits of inspection at various hours in the evenings, and there is much confusion over the hours of closing. A real grievance exists among those shopkeepers who close by requisition, on account of other shops who carry on a general business, and who sell goods as a side line similar to those sold in the shops which have closed, remaining open. I think a fixed general closing-hour for all shops would be beneficial, and I believe would be accepted by the shopkeepers themselves. Hotel and restaurant keepers are showing commendable zeal in their anxiety to comply with the provisions of the award and the Amendment Act, 1910. Schedules of hours of employment have been affixed in places accessible to the workers, showing the period during which each assistant must be on duty. Time and wages books and the holiday-books are kept well, and it is thus made easy to trace any neglect or default.

The number of shops on the register is 303, an increase of 54 over the previous year.

Warrants for overtime were issued to 284 assistants, who worked 4,156 hours.

Visits of inspection were made to every shop in the district, and due attention was paid in regard to the wages paid to employees, the sanitary arrangements, &c.

The number of prosecutions under the Act was 7; conviction was obtained in each instance. None of the cases calls for special comment. A number of minor cases were settled out of Court, and the sum of £10 17s. 9d. arrears of wages was recovered and paid over to the employees through the Department.

#### INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION AMENDMENT ACT.

It is pleasing to note the decrease in the number of cases brought before the Court for breaches of the various awards. The good feeling existing between the employers and employees renders it easy to effect amicable settlements in cases where it is shown that the breaches are not wilful, consequently there has been very little friction in the duties of enforcing the Act. Twelve employers and employees were cited for various breaches of awards, and penalties were inflicted in 10 cases. In addition to this the sum of £45 13s. 11d., arrears of wages due to employees, was collected.

#### SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION, ETC., ACT.

Visits of inspection have been made to those stations where improvements or new accommodation had been ordered, and it was found that the requests of the Department had all been complied with. Visits have been paid to other stations where complaints have been received respecting the accommodation, and notices to provide accommodation, or to effect improvements, have been served where necessary.