

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Advice is often sought by workers as to the mode of procedure in making their claims for compensation, and the Department is able to render a great deal of practical help to those entitled to same. Section 5 of the new Amendment Act, in allowing medical or surgical expenses up to £1 to the worker in respect of his injury, is a great advantage, especially in the case of minor injuries, to those who receive a small wage, as it often occurred that the medical expenses amounted to more than the compensation received. The only complaint I have received is where compensation, instead of being paid weekly, has been withheld until the worker resumed work.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

As Inspector of Scaffolding, I have paid visits of inspection to all buildings in course of erection, and in the course of those duties have visited Eltham, Hawera, Marton, and Taihape. (See detailed report.)

CONCLUSION.

I desire to acknowledge the kindly courtesy I have invariably received at the hands of all those with whom my duties have brought me in contact.

I have, &c.,
HENRY E. MOSTON,
Inspector of Factories.

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

PALMERSTON NORTH.

SIR,—

Palmerston North, 24th April, 1912.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report upon matters coming within the jurisdiction of the Palmerston North District office of the Department of Labour for the year ending the 31st March, 1912.

TRADE AND LABOUR MARKET.

The year just ended has been a good one for both employers and employed. Trade generally has been very satisfactory, and plenty of work has been available. A pleasing note is that the local Charitable Aid Board has found it necessary to expend less in relief-work during the past year than in any previous year for the past decade. Another notable feature of the past year is that three picture-shows have been running nightly, and drawing good houses, at Palmerston North. During the past few months a skating-rink has started, and is being well patronized; and all round one misses the pessimistic cry that was so prevalent during the previous year. The future is bright and hopeful.

Outside employment has been very plentiful, and perhaps what has helped most materially towards this has been the good weather which has prevailed through an exceptionally long and very mild summer.

Buildings, especially houses, are going up in all directions, and carpenters have been and still are in great demand. A large bank building is nearing completion, and within a few weeks some dozen or so workers' dwellings will also be in course of erection. As to municipal works, I quote the following: The number of building permits issued during the year ending 31st March, 1912, was 235, the value of the buildings erected being £62,819.

The amount spent by the borough in public works from loans was £4,864; and the amount spent in sewerage connections, £313.

The wages paid to the Municipal Corporation workers was £9,561. The most important public work which the Council has been carrying on during the year is raising the dam at the water-works to a height of 50 ft., and the result will be that the reservoir will hold 20,000,000 gallons of water.

During the current year it is expected that £18,000 will be spent in borough works, which will include sewer extensions, asphaltting the Square, cycle-tracks, surface drainage, and the erection of filters for cleansing the water.

Coachbuilders and tinsmiths have had and still have difficulty in completing their orders owing to the want of labour.

Tailors also complain of their inability to procure coat hands and tailoresses generally, whilst other firms have had to refuse work for lack of dressmakers.

Oilskin-making has improved its status owing to so many motorists requiring articles in this line, while the Military Training Depot being fixed at Palmerston North has led to the embroidery industry being more than doubled.

Overtime worked in both factories and shops shows a considerable increase over the past year, which is another proof of business activity.

While skilled labour has found no lack of employment during the year, I am pleased to report that there has been less unskilled labour offering than formerly (not in any way in excess of local demands), and consequently there has been no murmur of the "unemployed."

One hundred and seventy-four persons, with 58 dependants, have been assisted with railway passes at reduced fares to their places of employment. It is rather less than the previous year, which is another good sign. £56 13s. 6d. has been paid to the Railway Department for these fares, and of this amount less than £1 is still owing to this office, and even this small sum is guaranteed.