

Within the Borough of Palmerston North all the shops and factories have been visited during the year, as also have been many employers of labour working under awards. From each one visited every courtesy and consideration has been received.

I have, &c.,

W. J. CULVER,

Inspector of Factories and Awards

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

#### MASTERTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Masterton, 24th April, 1912.

I have the honour to submit herewith for your consideration the annual report of the working of the Department in the Masterton district for the year ended 31st March, 1912.

During the period just ended all persons concerned in business and trade and labour-conditions have enjoyed what may well be considered a very successful year. Employment, through its various avenues, has been fairly plentiful during the greater portion of the year. Commercial business has maintained a fair level generally, while some of the old-established firms report a record turnover during certain months in connection with ordinary sales.

In addition to the work at the freezing-works recently opened in this district, sausage-casing manufacturing has now assumed considerable proportions, and a number of men obtain steady employment during the season in this trade.

The dairying industry, in the manufacture of butter and cheese, has experienced an excellent year, and the output anticipated at the commencement of the season has been well sustained and satisfactory prices received. Additions were made to several factories during the previous year, and it is again proposed to increase the capacity of some of the factories throughout the district, also to erect new ones in readiness for the forthcoming season.

The sawmilling industry, which at one time was of very considerable commercial interest in the Wairarapa district, but of late years has dwindled down to a small factor, is about to be revived by the establishment of a mill in a bush of considerable size situated some fourteen miles from Masterton. This will cause employment for a number of men.

The building trade has, during the greater portion of the year, maintained a good level, and compares most favourably with that of the previous year; the number of building permits issued in accordance with the by-laws within the borough was 66, and the buildings were estimated to cost approximately £28,000; this shows almost twice the number of permits, and more than double the cost of buildings, as compared with the previous year. A considerable number of new buildings have been erected throughout the country districts, and generally very few tradesmen experienced any slack time.

The motor trade is now making considerable strides, and engaging a much larger number of hands. Several additions have been made to local factories, and new machinery installed, in order to successfully cope with the increased repair-work and manufacturing that is proposed to be done.

The coach and carriage building trade has experienced a very busy year, the demand at times being in excess of the amount of labour that could be supplied. The majority of tradesmen throughout the district have experienced no difficulty in obtaining full working-time, and, in addition to this, a considerable amount of overtime has been worked.

Agricultural-implement manufacturing, engineering, and iron-working have experienced a very fair year. All tradesmen, especially in the implement-manufacturing, have been exceptionally busy.

The furniture trade has made considerable improvement during the past year. There has been a demand for efficient workers, and those engaged in the trade have experienced something like full time. Retailers in the trade express themselves as being much more satisfied with the turnover for the period.

The cement, pipe, and brick and tile manufacturing trades have maintained a steady output, and all hands have been steadily employed.

Leather trades: Very fair steady employment has been experienced in connection with saddlery and harnessmaking, also bootmaking and repairing.

Clothing trades: Tailoring and dressmaking report a busy year. In each of these trades a great difficulty has been found at various times in obtaining skilled workers, and the only way found to cope with the difficulty has been to work a certain amount of overtime.

The year throughout has been an uneventful one, and free, so far as this district is concerned, from any industrial strife of any kind. The labour laws have been administered without much friction. Employers and employees now have a better knowledge of the requirements of the various laws, consequently there is less chance of infringement.

#### FACTORIES ACT.

One hundred and fifty factories were registered, a slight decrease on the number registered during the previous period.

Overtime warrants were issued to 16 employers to allow 86 women and boys to work 2,850 hours' overtime.