

and fair prices have been obtained for all farm produce. Hop-growers have had a remarkably good year. Prices have been exceptionally good, ranging from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 8d. per pound. These prices will cause a good deal of money to be circulated in the district.

Pastoralists have also had an exceptionally good year. The abundant supply of feed has enabled heavy stocks to be carried. The demand for store cattle and sheep has been far in excess of previous years, and good prices have ruled.

Mining: A revival in mining has taken place this year, chiefly in the Owen and Wangapeka districts. Prospecting parties have located several payable reefs, and this has caused some excitement in the district. Whether it is simply a "flash in the pan" or likely to be permanent cannot yet be said.

Shipping: At the port a considerable improvement has been made to wharves, &c. During the year there were 1,528 entries of steamers to the port; 6 of these were direct liners, 2 inter-colonial, and 339 were sailing-vessels with a total tonnage of 403,913 tons. This is a considerable increase on previous years, and is a good indication of the growth of the district.

#### FACTORIES ACT.

This Act has worked smoothly, and I am pleased to say the period has been one of prosperity for both employers and employees. The attention of employers to sanitary requirements and protection against accidents have been willingly given. In one or two cases alteration to factories have been necessary; plans which received the approval of the local authorities overlooked the requirements of the Act, with the result that extra expense had to be incurred by occupiers in order to comply with the provisions of the Act. It is also noticeable that many employees do not appreciate the advantages of having extracts from Acts and other regulations posted up in workrooms. In many factories I find the regulations, although on the walls, much defaced, and I have very often to ask employers to replace them.

During the year 280 factories were registered. This is an increase of 1 on last year. The number of workers engaged in factories numbered 1,633—1,387 males and 246 females—as against 1,377 males and 211 females employed the previous year.

Thirty-four certificates of fitness were issued to young persons to work in factories.

Two hundred and thirty-six warrants to work overtime were issued to 131 females and boys under sixteen years of age, who worked 4,711 hours. This is a considerable increase on overtime worked during last year. The amount of overtime worked is a clear indication of the briskness of trade and the shortage of labour.

*Accidents.*—Eleven accidents were reported. In one case the injury, which was caused through coming in contact with a circular saw, resulted in the loss of three fingers of the right hand. A second serious accident was to a youth working a chocolate-refining machine; his left hand was crushed between the cogs, with the result that he lost three fingers of the left hand. The other accidents were not of a serious nature. The sufferers were all interviewed, and made aware of the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. In no cases were employers to blame by reason of neglect, as in most instances the accidents arose from overconfidence in working machines. Notwithstanding that everything is done to assist workers, in some cases agreements of settlement have been entered into by some workers without any consultation, with the result that the settlements in no way compensated the workers for injuries received. The amending Act of 1911, which came into force on the 1st March, remedies this, and safeguards the interests of the injured.

*Prosecutions.*—There have been 6 prosecutions under the Act. In each case the decision was in favour of the Department. Arrears of wages to the amount of £20 have been paid to workers.

All factories have been visited, and I find, generally speaking, the provisions of the Act well adhered to. With few exceptions, employers in doubt seek the advice of the Department, and, as a rule, are prepared to abide thereby.

#### SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

During the year 329 shops, including 38 hotels, were registered. A total of 868 persons were engaged—329 occupiers, 320 male employees, and 219 females. The large increase in the number of shops registered is accounted for as follows: 10 new shops and 38 hotels (which prior to the coming into force of the amending Act of 1910 were not required to register as shops) being registered. The compulsory provision for keeping time and wages book in shops has had a very satisfactory result. It is now much easier to deal with hours worked and wages paid to assistants, and any attempt to evade the provisions of the Act can be more easily detected. Nearly all branches of business are now working under requisition of the majority for early closing, and, with few exceptions, shopkeepers faithfully close to time. Unfortunately, there are a few persons who are always trying to evade the hours set out in the requisitions. This causes a considerable amount of friction amongst fellow-traders, and the administration of the Act on this particular point has required considerable attention. Visits of inspection have been paid to all shops. Special attention has been paid to ventilation and to sanitation. Alterations are gradually being made to older buildings, and better sanitary arrangements are being put in. As a rule, I find the time and wages books, also holiday books, well kept in hotels. Hotel employees inform me that many abuses which formerly existed have now disappeared, and, generally speaking, the hours worked in hotels come well within those set out in the Shops and Offices Act.

*Overtime.*—191 warrants were issued to 141 assistants, who worked 3,598 hours' overtime. The overtime worked was chiefly in connection with stocktaking. Permits have been applied for in very few cases for the purpose of delivering goods or making up orders, the general work of the shop. Some employers contend that the delivering of orders should come within the meaning