

Two hundred and four skilled and unskilled workers were assisted, 103 of whom were sent to Government works; 59 were married, 7 widowers, and 138 single.

The practical completion of the railway-extension works, the finishing of works in hand by the Lands Department at Runanga, the suspension of work for the time being in the North Brunner Coal Company's mine, and also in the Paparoa Coal Company's mine, has been responsible for the dismissal of a large number of men from employment.

The Harbour Board dock-extension scheme being now in active operation has given employment to a few men. Probably a few more will be employed shortly as the operations extend.

FACTORIES ACT.

During the year 138 factories were registered.

Certificates of fitness were issued to 10 boys and 4 girls under sixteen years of age.

Overtime to the extent of 2,898 hours was worked by 87 females, and 4,924 hours by males, in the various factories.

Five cases for breaches of the Act were dealt with by prosecution in the Magistrate's Court, 4 of which were decided in favour of the Department, and 1 case was dismissed; 25 cases were investigated *re* failure to pay wages in full, and were settled amicably without recourse to law, back wages amounting to £42 3s. 4d. being recovered.

Altogether there have been 14 accidents, 1 fatal and 4 serious, the rest causing minor injuries. Inquiries were instituted in each case as to the proper guarding of the machinery, and to see that the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act were complied with.

Generally speaking, the Factories Act has been fairly well complied with. In a number of old buildings the ventilation and sanitation is not up to the standard of efficiency that would be insisted upon in a new structure.

I would respectfully draw the attention of the Department to the desirability of having section 41 of the Factories Act amended, making it imperative that occupiers of factories shall notify Inspectors, of accidents that may happen to their employees beyond the sphere of the factory premises. For instance, most serious accidents happen to men engaged in getting logs for the mill in the bush some miles from the factory, and because of their isolation from the factory building no notice is at present required.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The registration of 200 shops has been effected; five have since been closed.

The provisions of the Act have been fairly well observed. In a few instances a letter of warning has been sufficient to make the occupiers more cautious. Five cases were dealt with under the Act by prosecution, 4 of which were decided by the Magistrate in favour of the Department, and 1 was dismissed. Nine cases were investigated *re* failure to pay wages in full, and the sum of £11 11s. was recovered without recourse to legal action.

Shopkeepers who have requisitioned the aid of section 25 of the Act have appreciated the regularity of closing-time fixed by them through its provisions.

During the year the stationers and booksellers have also taken advantage of the provisions of the Act, and a petition has gone forward from the hairdressers and tobacconists asking to be brought under this section.

Overtime permits were granted to 42 assistants, who worked 724 hours' overtime.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

Inspection visits have been made to all buildings in course of erection throughout the Industrial District of Westland. (See reports of Inspectors of Scaffolding.)

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The provisions of the Act have been fairly well observed in connection with awards that have been in operation. A considerable amount of attention has been given to the Westland Tailoring Trade award, which came into operation at the beginning of the year. This was owing principally to the parties attached not understanding the conditions laid down therein. However, I am pleased to report that matters are now working smoothly, and a better understanding prevails between the employers and the employed.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

A considerable number of callers have applied for advice under this Act. In one case where a worker had been permanently incapacitated for nine months with a gashed knee-joint and crushed foot (same leg) he had received from the company £1 13s. per week during that period; the doctor then advised that he was as well as he (the doctor) could make him; the leg was wholly useless, but was not deemed so under the Act at that time; the claimant put the case into the hands of the Department, and a final settlement in a lump sum of £270 was secured for him. In another case a full settlement was effected for £62 8s. 9d., plus £18 5s. 1d. during period of incapacitation, making a total of £80 13s. 9d. for the loss of two finger-joints of each of third and fourth fingers.