

CONCLUSION.

Hokitika, Ross, Kumara, Brunnerton, Reefton, and Westport have been visited, and a general inspection made of the various shops, factories, &c., in each town and district. Considering the limited amount of time at the disposal of the officers of the Police Department who have been appointed to take up the added responsibility of Inspectors of Factories in these towns, they have done well indeed. I have to express my sincere thanks for the courtesy and assistance I have received at their hands during the execution of my duties.

I have, &c.,

JOHN JACKSON,

Inspector of Factories.

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

TIMARU.

SIR,—

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

I have the honour to submit for your consideration my report on the Department's work in the South Canterbury district for the year ending 31st March, 1912.

It is pleasing to note that the prosperity of the district referred to in my last report has continued right through the year that has just expired, notwithstanding the fact that during last summer a great deal of wet weather was experienced, and through it the shearing and harvesting operations were somewhat delayed.

The wool season was a very good average one, and prices were well maintained at each of the local sales.

The freezing-works industry last season was exceptionally busy, but it is thought that a considerable falling-off will be experienced this season owing to the large number slaughtered last season, and to the increased demand for stock required by new settlers.

The grain harvest has been a fair average one, and had it not been for the inclement weather experienced during the summer there is little doubt that the crops would have been phenomenal; as it is, one hears of farmers here and there whose crops have threshed 80 bushels of oats and 60 bushels of wheat per acre respectively; but, on the other hand, a few crops were not worth reaping.

The dairying industry has revived considerably, and the institution of a grading store at the port has greatly improved the export facilities.

The building trade has been very busy indeed, and men have been much in demand in all branches of the trade, but a shortage of bricks during a good part of the summer seriously delayed several contracts. The number of applications for building permits issued by the Borough Council during the year was 250, and the estimated cost of these buildings was £106,683 1s.

The clothing trades have had an exceptionally good year, and there has really been no slack time to speak of since I submitted my last report. The shortage of hands in the tailoring trade referred to then is now more noticeable than ever, and the increased amount of overtime worked by fewer hands than last year shows how acute the position is becoming. (See under "Factories Act.")

The retail trades have done very good business, and several new shops have been opened, and many of the well-established businesses have extended and improved their premises.

The Port of Timaru has again had a very prosperous year (ending 31st December, 1911). The total exports and imports combined amounted to 185,432 tons. This exceeds last year's tonnage by over 13,000 tons; and the total imports this year were 89,963 tons (record), and the total exports 95,469 tons. The declared value of foreign and intercolonial trade was £1,451,318, and the value of the coastal trade is estimated at £750,000.

The port continues to hold the third position in New Zealand in the frozen mutton and lamb exports, and has held this position for the past eight years. The number of carcasses exported during the year was 699,149. This shows a considerable decrease on the previous year, notwithstanding the fact that more animals were slaughtered last year, but is accounted for by the fact that there was a larger proportion of "potters" than usual.

The principal imports and exports were as follows: Imports—Timber, 7,458,819 super. ft.; coal, 41,909 tons; general merchandise, 31,348 tons. Exports—Wool, 41,449 bales; wheat, 418,552 sacks; oats, 37,477 sacks; flour, 178,423 sacks; oatmeal, 3,655 sacks; bran and sharps, 77,669 sacks; cheese, 1,938 crates; butter, 4,040 cases.

FACTORIES ACT.

There were 233 factories registered. This shows a net increase of 10 over the previous year, a satisfactory state of trade. Two factories enlarged their staffs and paid the additional fees required by the Act.

Fifty-nine certificates of fitness to work in factories have been issued to 23 boys and 36 girls.

The amount of overtime for boys under sixteen and females has greatly increased as shown: Number of workers—1911, 233; 1912, 185: overtime worked—1911, 8,244 hours; 1912, 10,666 hours.

Thirty-six accidents were reported, 1, unfortunately, proving fatal; the remainder were principally of a slight nature, mostly cuts and abrasions sustained by freezing-works employees.