

I am pleased to say that it has not been necessary to prosecute any employer under this Act, although a good many warnings have had to be given.

The factories throughout the town and district are, generally speaking, well equipped and conducted, and employers appear to be anxious to carry out the requirements of the Act, and to comply with any suggestions made.

The drainage scheme is now practically completed as far as the business portion of the town is concerned, and the various business houses are rapidly making necessary alterations in their sanitary arrangements, and connecting with the new sewers.

I have visited every factory on my register at least once during the year, and a large number have been visited several times. I have also made inspection of factories situated in the country districts.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The number of shops registered was 266. The usual fluctuations due to the opening and closing down of small businesses has been experienced, and a few businesses of a fair size have commenced, and seem likely to continue.

Overtime permits were issued to 207 assistants to work 3,038 hours.

This Act is working very well, and its provisions are well observed on the whole. Seven informations were laid under the Act, and convictions, with penalties and costs, were obtained in all but one case, which was dismissed; and in one case the defendant appealed to the Supreme Court, but was unsuccessful, the judgment of the Stipendiary Magistrate being upheld.

A large number of warnings have been given to shopkeepers, particularly in respect to the keeping of a time and wages book, but I find that there is a decided improvement lately on this point.

I have visited every shop on my register.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are only three offices now registered under this Act, and they are well conducted according to the provisions of the Act, although the practice of charging fees to workers only is still in vogue with two out of the three offices.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

Twenty-five cases for enforcement of awards have been taken before the Magistrate's Court, and penalties have been inflicted in 20 of these; in 4 cases breaches have been recorded, and only 1 case was dismissed.

The case referred to in my last report was taken in the Arbitration Court, and a breach was recorded and witnesses' expenses were allowed. This was a case affecting the plumbing trade, and several local firms were concerned. After the Court had given its decision back wages were collected from these firms.

One case for breach of the Act (failing to keep time and wages book) was taken, and a penalty inflicted.

One or two strikes have occurred. They were of a very short duration, owing to the employers meeting the men's demands. The union concerned has recently cancelled its registration, and has had another strike, but things are working smoothly now.

Sixteen permits to incompetent workers have been granted, and I am pleased to note the decrease in the number of these. Doubtless this is due to the fact that trade has been exceedingly good, and employers have gladly paid award rates to secure the services of even indifferent workers.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

There has been a falling-off in the number of workers seeking advice under this Act, but those who have applied have been dealt with satisfactorily, and in no instance have legal steps been necessary.

The provisions of the 1911 amending Act relating to agreements of settlement of claim are in the right direction, but I think it should be extended to apply to temporary as well as permanent disablement.

The provision of payment for medical and surgical attendance is of benefit to the workers, although the amount allowed is rather inadequate, as cases have occurred in the past where the cost of medical and surgical attendance has taken almost all, if not all, the compensation payable.

CONCLUSION.

During the year I have paid frequent visits to Waimate, Temuka, Geraldine, Fairlie, St. Andrew's, Pleasant Point, Washdyke, &c., in connection with the various labour laws, and I desire to express my thanks to employers, employees, and others for their courtesy and assistance to me in carrying out my duties.

I have, &c.,

GEO. H. LIGHTFOOT,

Inspector of Factories.

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