

a rush set in, and overtime had to be worked to keep up with orders. There has been a fair demand throughout the year for competent workers in the different branches of the trade. Manufacturers generally express themselves well satisfied with the business done.

Plumbing, gasfitting, &c.: In keeping with the rush in the building trade, plumbers and gasfitters have had a busy year. Gas-mains are being extended into the outer areas of the town, where residents have not been slow to take advantage of the benefits bestowed by the City Corporation. In connection with the plumbing trade the ensuing year should be marked with even increased business, on account of the City Council having decided on an up-to-date sewerage system in the inner area. Connections and fittings will considerably increase the work of the plumber. There was some demand at different periods of the year for plumbers at good wages, and never at any time the least complaint of slackness.

Furniture trades: A very satisfactory year is reported. Not only have shop sales been good, but order work direct from the factories has shown an increase on previous years. All the workshops have found it necessary to make additions to their working staffs. At the end of the year everything pointed to a good future for the trade. Manufacturers are adapting themselves to the newer styles in furnishings, and are keeping their stocks thoroughly up to date in every respect.

Coachbuilding: Never at any time during the year has there been the least suspicion of dulness in this trade. Motor-car building has now become an established branch of the trade in the local workshops, and some of the cars turned out would be a standing advertisement to any workshop in the Dominion. Probably nothing finer in finish and general get-up than the local production can be seen anywhere. The opening of new country has created a demand for drays, spring carts, &c., and orders have been continually overlapping. At the closing of the year the workshops were full up with orders for prompt delivery.

Boot and shoe trade: There has been more time lost by workers in this trade than in any other of the indoor industries. About the middle of the period under review both female and male operatives were on enforced holidays for some weeks. After the New Year things brightened up considerably, and at the close of the period there was plenty of work for all.

Tailoring: There has been an increase in the number of tailoring establishments in the town, with, apparently, ample trade for all. The amount of overtime worked by all operatives has been far and away ahead of any other trade. Female operatives were hard to get, while good tailors were always sure of work. There was great demand for heavy clothing at Easter time, no doubt on account of the variable weather, consequently the trade was busier than usual for the last few months of the year.

Dressmaking and millinery: In the dressmaking section full advantage was taken of the overtime clauses of the Factories Act, all the work-rooms putting in well on to the limit of hours allowed. Millinery was not so busy. Newer and simpler designs in headgear have considerably reduced the demand for the milliners' art, and until something more artistic and striking in appearance is created the milliners will not be called upon to work much overtime.

Hosiery and shirtmaking: There has been a very steady demand for these goods, and the places specializing have had a very good run of work throughout the year.

Agricultural and pastoral: From the point of view of the raiser of stock, the 1911-12 season cannot be looked upon as having been all that could be desired. The lambing season opened well, there being every indication of a heavy crop of early lambs, and sheepowners were looking forward to a record season. Before the lambs were strong enough to battle for themselves cold boisterous weather set in, and the young bodies received such a check in growth that it took a considerable time to recuperate, and instead of fine, robust youngsters ready for early export, the lambs coming forward were stunted as compared with those of the previous year, with the result that operations at the freezing-works were rather spasmodic at the beginning. All live-stock received a decided setback in the spring, and, on account of the changeable weather throughout the summer, have not thriven as in former years. There was abundance of grass and other green foods, but the quality was not good, and, though sheep fattened quickly, there was an absence of the firmness in flesh to be found in drier and warmer seasons. Turnip crops are not good, second sowing having to be resorted to over a large tract of country. Winter feed will be scarce all over the district, and should the season be a hard one, many stockowners will find a difficulty in carrying their flocks through to the spring. Shearing operations were carried on under difficulties, and, in consequence, the first wool sale of the series had to be abandoned; only two sales were held, but prices were quite up to the expectations. Throughout the whole province there is a tendency to bring new lands under cultivation, and the passing of bush and swamps is a matter of a very few years. Farm labourers have been in short supply throughout the year, and good men were readily placed at good wages. There are plenty of openings for youths to learn farming, but the work does not seem to appeal to the taste of many of this class.

MEN'S EMPLOYMENT BRANCH.

The number of men seeking employment has been comparatively small, and of those registering their names, full 60 per cent. were found employment. The expenditure of loan-moneys by the City Council in the construction of tram-lines and appurtenances helped to keep a large number of men in fairly constant employment throughout the year. Public works still in hand and in contemplation should remove all anxiety on the score of lack of employment for some considerable time. There has been a constant demand for men for country work, road-construction, flax-milling, &c. A number of flax-mills were delayed in starting on account of shortage of suitable labour. Harvesting operations were carried on under difficulties, and farmers were forced to adopt a system of socialism by helping one another to save the crops. There were not