

any Government works started in the district during the year, and men taken by the Public Works or other Government departments were required for finishing off and carrying on works left over from the previous year.

#### FACTORIES ACT.

The number of factories registered was 338, exactly the number registered the previous year.

Certificates of fitness were issued to 49 young persons to work in factories—29 boys and 20 girls. Last year's figures: 49 permits—28 boys, 21 girls.

*Overtime.*—In factories 320 females and boys under sixteen years of age worked 12,224 hours.

*Accidents.*—Twenty-five accidents were reported and inquired into during the year, 1 of which was fatal.

*Half-holidays.*—The weekly half-holiday for females and boys has been strictly observed in the various factories.

*Prosecutions.*—One prosecution was taken under the Factories Act—against a laundry-proprietor for failing to pay wages fortnightly to an employee.

#### SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

There has not been any prosecution under this Act in Invercargill, but it has been necessary to caution several shopkeepers against keeping open after closing-hours fixed by requisition. The introduction of time and wages books has been gradually brought about, and, although a little trouble was occasioned in the initial stages, the system is now working satisfactorily. A number of shops have changed hands, some had ceased to exist, while new places have been opened. The half-holiday has been well observed, and very little complaint has been made with regard to alleged back-door trading, which is the hardest possible offence to detect and sheet home to the guilty person. An amendment to the Act, giving an Inspector power to prosecute any one trying to gain admittance to a shop after closing-hours, would have a wonderfully good effect, and would go a long way towards putting a stop to a nefarious practice too common in all centres.

Returns were collected from 382 shops and restaurants, an increase of 25 over the previous year.

#### INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

Work under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act is increasing year by year. The number of awards operating in Southland has now reached the respectable total of 37, covering almost every trade and industry carried on in the district. Inspection under the different awards entails a considerable amount of travelling, which in a year amounts to thousands of miles. Visits have been paid to all the outlying districts at intervals during the year, and working conditions have been explained to those coming under awards. There is usually a little friction when a new award comes into force, or some industry is brought under an award for the first time. On such occasions everything possible has been done to clear away misunderstandings and put the offending ones on the right track.

Three persons were proceeded against for breaches of awards. In 2 cases penalties were inflicted, and 1 was dismissed for want of sufficient evidence. Penalties amounted to £6, and £1 3s. costs were allowed.

Back wages amounting to £17 18s. 9d. were collected, covering breaches of the tailoring trade and sawmilling awards.

#### SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There were 8 persons holding licenses under the Act in Invercargill, and the requirements of the law have been strictly carried out.

#### CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I have again to thank the police officers in the outlying districts for the valuable assistance at all times cheerfully given. Our police Factory Inspectors devote a considerable amount of time to the work of inspection, and are ever ready to assist in carrying out award work in their respective districts.

I have, &c.,

H. B. BOWER,

Inspector of Factories.

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

#### DARGAVILLE.

All branches of trade have been brisk, and almost all employers have had difficulty in obtaining sufficient men to keep pace with the work in hand. The building trade has been particularly busy, and builders have refused work owing to the scarcity of good men. Painters are now advertised for at 14s. per day, and are obtained only with difficulty. The tailoring trade has also been busy, and a fair amount of overtime had to be worked to keep up with the demand. The sawmilling industry has been working full time during the year, and overtime occasionally to execute orders.

Unskilled labour has been in great demand; sufficient good men could not be got to do the work in the district, and contractors have not tendered for work on that account. Roadmen are receiving 9s. and 10s. per day. Good bushmen are getting £2 15s. and found (per week). There has also been a great scarcity of domestic servants in the district. Hotelkeepers and boarding-house-keepers have been continually advertising for suitable women.