

## GISBORNE.

Sir,—

Department of Labour, Gisborne, 24th April, 1913.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the working of the Department in Gisborne during the year ending 31st March, 1913.

I have to report that prosperous times have continued throughout the year. Excellent prices have been obtained for local products, and a considerable area of new land has been opened up. There has been much activity in the building trade, the number of building permits issued by the Borough Council for the year amounting to 303, while the total value of the buildings was £114,192 16s. 6d., an increase of £22,000 over last year. A sewerage system has been installed, and a section of tramway completed, which will be opened for traffic in a few days. The harbour-works are still in progress, and the work done has already effected a considerable improvement to the port. The exports from this port for the year show a total value of £1,217,614, an increase of £145,014 on last year's returns. The opening of a fresh section of the railway has enabled local builders to get the advantage of the district's timber resources to some extent.

## FACTORIES ACT.

During the year 200 factories have been registered, giving employment to 1,716 people. Overtime warrants were issued to 144 women and boys to work 3,338 hours. Permits have been issued to 24 young persons under sixteen years of age to work in factories. There were 51 accidents reported, but none of these were such as to cause serious permanent disablement. There were 5 cases taken to the Court for breaches of the Act. Employers are generally observant of the provisions of the Act, and, as a rule, are quite willing to remedy any remissness pointed out to them.

## SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

During the year 239 shops have been registered, employing 858 persons. Warrants have been issued to 187 persons to work 2,945 hours overtime. Six cases have been taken to the Court for breaches of the Act; 5 of them related to restaurants and tea-rooms under the Act of 1910. I have found some difficulty in inducing the occupiers of these establishments to observe the provisions of the Act in regard to the number of hours to be worked. Apart from this there has been no difficulty in administering the Act.

## INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

During the year 6 new awards and industrial agreements have been brought into operation. The Slaughtermen's Union cancelled its registration under the Act, and being thus free to do so without incurring the penalties of the Act, went on strike. No difficulty was found, however, by the employers in filling the places of the strikers, and the output of the meat-freezing works was not materially affected.

Legal proceedings were taken against 16 shop butchers who had taken part in an unlawful strike within the meaning of the Act. A fine of £3 and 7s. costs was ordered in each of 7 cases; in 1 case a fine of £1 and 7s. costs; and in another case a fine of £10 and 7s. costs. Two cases were dismissed and 5 withdrawn, as it was shown that the employers had dismissed the men before the strike occurred. The strikers were idle eighteen days, when a few left the district, and the remainder were taken on again under an industrial agreement.

Seven cases have been taken before the Court for breaches of awards and industrial agreements, and a total of £3 10s. fines and costs inflicted.

## ACCOMMODATION FOR SHEARERS.

During the year 54 stations have been inspected, covering over 500 miles of travelling. It was found that 20 employers had provided new accommodation or made additions. Notices have been served on 10 employers to provide accommodation or to make improvements. In many cases it has been ascertained that the notices previously issued have been complied with. Section 6 (2) of the Act, requiring notices to be served not later than the first day of June in each year, causes unnecessary complication, as in this district shearing commences about October, and for many reasons the best time for inspection is while shearing is in operation. The same section also requires the notices to be served personally on the employer or by leaving the same at his usual or last known place of residence. There seems to be no reason why a receipt for a registered letter should not be accepted as proof of service. An amendment of the Act in this direction would relieve the Inspector of a good deal of unnecessary work and the Department of some considerable expense.

## EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

During the year 372 applications for employment were received, and 65 persons have been sent to employment. Very few of the applicants called a second time, and it is fair to conclude that the remainder found employment without the assistance of the bureau. The year has been an exceptionally good one for all classes of labour, but more particularly in the skilled trades. Although skilled tradesmen are likely to find no difficulty in getting employment for some time to come, there are indications that there will be a lessening of the demand for unskilled labour during the coming winter. Several of the municipal works which have employed a considerable number of men during the past year are drawing to a finish, and, generally speaking, as far as the country district is concerned, labour is not much in demand during the winter season.