

A number of disputes between employers and employees in the hotels have been referred to this office, chiefly in regard to wages and notice of dismissal or notice to leave. There is no award here covering this particular business, and as a majority of the workers come from districts in which awards are in force, a good deal of misunderstanding is caused.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The administration of this Act has taken up a great deal of time during the latter part of the year. Three building-trade awards have been made—viz., carpenters, plumbers, and labourers—and, as none of these industries was previously working under an award, the numerous inquiries made by the parties affected have caused a considerable amount of travelling about for the purpose of adjusting errors and giving information. The Department certainly appears to be of benefit in this respect, and the lack of serious or intentional breaches speaks well for the good feeling existing between employers and workers.

Forty complaints have been received, and as the majority of these were in respect of what, on inquiry, proved to be misinterpretation of the meaning of the awards, the matters were, with the exception of 2 cases, settled immediately the error was pointed out. Two cases were taken before the Court, and penalties inflicted in both instances.

Arrears of wages to the total amount of £37 ls. 0½d. have been recovered on behalf of employees.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are 3 offices registered in New Plymouth. No complaints have been received in respect to them, and they appear to be well conducted.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT.

Inquiries are being made at Waitara and Stratford with a view to the erection of a number of dwellings.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

As Inspector of Scaffolding I have paid periodical visits to all scaffolding throughout the district (see separate report).

CONCLUSION.

I have to thank the various local Inspectors and other officials with whom I have come into contact for the assistance rendered while carrying out my various duties.

I have, &c.,

W. SLAUGHTER,

Inspector of Factories.

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

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wanganui, 18th April, 1913.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report on the work of the Department in the Wanganui district for the year ending the 31st March, 1913.

GENERAL.

The year just closed has been a prosperous one in both town and country. The weather-conditions throughout the year, on the whole, have been favourable to farmers. Good prices were obtained for wool and dairy-produce, and the season gives promise of being an exceptionally long one.

The freezing industry, although retarded somewhat by the strike which occurred in January, has now recovered, and at the time of writing the local works are fully staffed, and stock is coming in at a satisfactory rate.

The prosperity of the town is reflected in the fine buildings which have been erected during the period. There has been no relaxation in the building trade throughout the year, and it is interesting to note that the value of building permits issued by the borough for the year just ended exceeds that of the previous year by £19,266, the figures being 266 permits to the value of £107,144, as compared with 225 permits, value £87,878, for the previous year. In addition to the above, buildings have rapidly been erected in the suburbs, the value of permits issued in Gonville alone being £26,594. At the present time there is a large amount of work in progress, but future indications point to a slackening-off in the activities of these trades, owing to the tightness of the money-market.

The trade of the port has increased considerably. Customs duties for the year ending 31st March, 1913, show an increase of £3,665 over the previous year. The value of the increase in exports for the same period amounts to £184,518, the total amount for the year ending 31st March, 1912, £411,992, and for the year ending 31st March, 1913, £596,510. The principal increases in exports are 14,738 carcasses of frozen mutton, 20,075 carcasses of lamb, 6,981 bales of wool, 8,198 boxes of butter, and 2,279 crates of cheese. These figures in themselves are a sufficient indication of the steady development not only of the town, but of the country.

Joinery and timber mills have experienced a very satisfactory year, and employment has