

Dressmakers	...	...	454	persons worked	1,267	hours.
Tailoresses	...	...	653	"	1,911	"
Waterproof clothing	...	...	829	"	2,613	"
Laundries	...	...	233	"	699	"
Bootmakers	...	...	196	"	588	"
Tentmakers	...	...	34	"	101	"
Hatters	...	...	35	"	105	"
Tinsmiths	...	...	12	"	36	"
Ironworkers	...	...	24	"	72	"
Totals	...	...	2,470	persons worked	7,392	hours.

Whilst dealing with overtime questions, it would be well if section 51 were amended by removing the twenty days' limit, and leaving it to the Inspector to arrange the number of days per week that persons would be permitted to work overtime. As the twenty days' limit presses unduly on the tailoresses especially, who are principally piece-workers, and lose a great deal of time in the dull season, they think it hard they should be debarred from making up some of the time in the brisk season that they lost when work was slack, and take work home with them, and work all hours without restriction.

There have been eight accidents reported in this district during the year, and they were fortunately of a slight nature, chiefly arising from thoughtlessness whilst working with machinery.

There has been an increase of registered factories and workrooms during the year of fifty-three, employing 259 persons—*i.e.*, 135 males and 124 females; but twenty factories and workrooms, which employed 104 persons—*i.e.*, 42 males and 62 females—last year, have failed to register for the current year, chiefly through not at present employing the required number of persons to bring them under the Factories Act. There are 252 registered factories and workrooms, including forty-three bakeries, in the district, employing 3,327 persons—*i.e.*, 2,568 males and 759 females.

I am confident in stating that the Factories Act is working satisfactorily in this district.

Paid 1,127 visits of inspection to factories and workrooms.

SHOP AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report on the working Shop and Shop-assistants Act in this district, and to state that it has not been as satisfactory as we would wish it to be. The stronger points against the success of the Act are, the want of compulsory closing on one day in each week at 1 p.m. for all classes of shops, and a sanitary clause.

The only trades that have made any pretence of making the half-holiday a success have been the drapers and butchers; all the others have gone about it in a half-hearted manner, from the fact that several in each trade decline to close their shops; and those who would close say they must keep open to protect their business. Their employes get their half-holiday, but it is robbed of its benefit to them by the fact that they get it often on days that all their companions are at work, and they have no means of enjoying themselves. Then, it is a very difficult matter to find out if the assistants really get their holiday regularly, as they will not give an Inspector any information, and it is almost impossible to find out from personal knowledge.

In the present Act there is no provision for a dinner-hour; it simply provides for fifty-eight hours per week, including meal-times, as the time that women or persons under eighteen years of age shall be employed. I think it would be an advantage if you could fix a meal-hour, and limit the working-hours of women and young persons per day instead of per week. It is also very necessary that the new Act should have a sanitary clause similar to section 3 of "The Factories Act Amendment Act, 1892."

There has been two convictions under section 3; both were pork-butchers. One was fined £2 and costs, the other £5 and costs, the Resident Magistrate remarking that the law was that each shop-assistant should have a half-holiday each week, and if they would not observe the law they would find it an expensive game.

In conclusion I may say that I do not consider that the present Act is working satisfactorily to either employer, employe, or the department.

E. Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector.

I have, &c.,

JAMES SHANAGHAN, Inspector.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

SIR,—

1st April, 1894.

I have the honour to forward you a report of the factories for the year ending 31st March, 1894, in the Palmerston North District. There are in all forty-three small factories registered under the Factories Act up to date, two of which were registered in the Pohangina, against forty-seven last year, but this decrease is owing to a few tailors, dressmakers, and a couple of bakers, who only employ two hands each, owing to the dullness of the times. The fees received for the current year amount to £19, against £21 11s. for 1893. I have on several occasions visited the workshops and factories, and on each occasion found them fairly clean and satisfactory. With regard to the keeping of the half-holiday, Wednesday is principally the recognised day, but a few wheelwrights, coachbuilders, and blacksmiths keep their half-holiday on Saturdays. With reference to the Shops and Shop-assistants Act, they are allowed their half-holiday, with one exception—that of a store, the manager of which was in the habit of letting the assistants go at 1 p.m. and all to return same evening at about 7 p.m. and remain until about 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. However, I have put a stop to