

union in connection with carpenters and allied trades, under "The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1894," recent events in their trades having impressed upon tradesmen the necessity of forming a registered union.

E. Tregear, Esq., Wellington.

I have, &c.,

H. McKAY, Agent.

WAIPAWA.

SIR,—

Waipawa, 18th April, 1895.

I beg to report that there were no complaints from any person employed in factories, and the employers evidently dealt with employés in a fair manner. I visited factories and workrooms, but discovered no breaches of the law during any of my visits.

With respect to labour during the first five months or more of the year, a large number of men found employment on the railway co-operative works who resided in and about Woodville—more in proportion than in many other districts, and but for which some of the men and families would have been in great poverty. After the completion of the earth-works and fencing there was no opening save for a few very needy cases on the railway. Shortly after this some got employment on road-works on the Mangatoro Valley, Tawai, near Coonoor, the Waikopiro, and Hall Blocks. And there is no doubt that, so far as Woodville district was concerned, the co-operative works were a great boon, and realised a good wage to those who could work with a moderate amount of experience and attention. Although there was a lot of grumbling it made no difference to the great desire of the grumblers to get fresh contracts. It was well on in spring before the completion of the co-operative works at Woodville; and, when it was evident no further work was obtainable, openings occurred by degrees at other private works, and in a short space of time there were but few applications at the bureau. A decided improvement was therefore noticeable from that of the previous year about the same period, and there was comparatively no poverty. Any real needful cases, when represented to Wellington, were responded to with the least possible delay, and every assistance rendered at all times, for which the applicants were grateful.

The swaggers during the last winter were numerous, but relief was afforded them by the Napier Charitable Aid Board authorising the issue of rations until a time when work became fairly plentiful.

E. Tregear, Esq.

I have, &c.,

J. TREANOR, Labour Agent for Woodville.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Factory Office, Wanganui, 22nd March, 1896.

I beg to report having registered 116 factories up to date for 1896, employing 554 males and 114 females, and there are a few more to register, which will make up the number to 120, being an increase of sixteen from last year.

The state of trade in Wanganui has been very good for the last twelve months, and the town is rapidly going ahead, a large number of new buildings having been erected, and a number still in course of erection; still the demand for houses is unsatisfied.

The Sedgebrook Estate, in the vicinity of Wanganui, has been cut up and sold at large prices, and no doubt a number of new buildings will be erected there very shortly.

The large factories here have been mostly running full time during the year, with the exception of the freezing-works, which closed for three months only this year. There has been very few skilled workmen out of employ, and good men can always generally get work during the year.

With regard to unskilled labour, there were a large number of men out of employ last winter, but since then the demand for labour has been good. Very few good men looking for employment lately, with the exception of some men who have been knocked off co-operative work, and have not yet succeeded in finding work; but as there will soon be some contracts out they will likely find employment.

With regard to the Shop-assistants Act, I find it works very smoothly here, the various shopkeepers rigidly complying with the Act; and the Council having fixed Thursday afternoon for all shops to close, it has given general satisfaction. The drapers and milliners here have changed the day, through the Council, under the Factory Act, to Thursday afternoon, so as to let all their employés go on one day; it appears to work very well as yet.

There has been nothing special to report, no accidents in factories having occurred during the year, and only three breaches of the Shop-assistants Act against tobacconists for keeping open on Thursday evenings (the half-holiday); they were fined, and since then there has been no breaches of the Act.

Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD VILLARS, Inspector of Factories.

EKETAHUNA.

SIR,—

Eketahuna, 31st March, 1896.

I have the honour to submit my labour reports and the Acts affecting it for the year ending 31st March, 1896, in my district.

Up to date there are twenty factories registered, employing eighty-six persons—principally male adults, two of that number only being females, with about three hundred and fifty others depending on them. Taking into consideration the locality and the general roughness of the country, and the scattered positions of a number of the factories, the Act is fairly complied with. The owners exhibit every tendency to comply with the different provisions of the Act. Any suggestions are met in the same spirit as proposed, and cheerfully carried out, rendering friction scarcely possible.