

The farm as at present carried on is an ordinary dairy farm. On it during the season 100 cows have been in milk at the same time, and of the herd of 120 only four reacted under the tuberculin test to which they were submitted by the Stock Inspector, a fact proving the carefulness with which they had been selected. There are about three hundred and fifty pigs at present on the farm. These are of all sizes; those sent into town during the season realised top prices. The same result as to price attended the sale of fat cattle, while the produce of the brood mares was of a high class. Potatoes, onions, and other produce were raised on the small portion of land hitherto brought into cultivation; the great expense of grubbing up the roots and removing logs, &c., from what was until lately heavy bush land precluding, from its expense, a large area being cropped until the timber has become rotten and more cheaply removed. 27,751 lb. of cream (which yielded 9,619½ lb. of butter-fat) was the yield of the dairy for the year. The dairy is provided with a Sharples's separator of the most modern and improved pattern. Milking is done by contract, the work being performed by two families resident on the farm.

There are about twenty hands at present employed on the Levin State farm. Some of these are elderly men who would not be employed by the ordinary contractor; they are engaged at the lighter portions of orchard- and farm-work, while the able-bodied men are fencing, stumping, logging, &c. The improvements effected during the year have added considerably to the value of the farm. An acre or two of ground is being fenced in to experiment with different grasses, potatoes, beet, carrots, turnips, &c., to ascertain which is the most suitable kind for the soil and climate.

REPORTS OF LOCAL INSPECTORS OF FACTORIES AND AGENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 31st March, 1899.

I have the honour to submit for your consideration my report for the year just ended. On the whole, 1898-99 has been a successful year in factory circles, most trades being very regularly employed. The boot trade is an exception, the hands not having been fully employed in this district during the year. There are many reasons given for this, chief amongst them being that the market is stocked with imported goods at prices that the local manufacturers cannot compete with. We have also had machinery introduced into the factories, which has had the effect of throwing many tradesmen out of work.

The manufacture of wax-vestas has also been retarded through the difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of girls to work in the factory, mainly in the box-filling department. The conditions of employment in this trade are that girls are taken on at a weekly wage of 6s. until they become fairly proficient at their work, then they are put on to piecework, and their earnings average from 7s. 6d. to £1 1s. per week. The sanitary condition of the factory is good; everything that can reasonably be expected is done for the convenience of the employés. Abundance of hot and cold water is provided for the lavatories, and notices are posted through the factory pointing out the necessity for cleanliness. But the business is evidently unpopular; more especially has this been the case since prosecutions were taken by the Factory Department in England against a manufacturer for concealing cases of necrosis, or "phossy jaw," and failing to report the same. The report of the agitation that followed the said proceedings was widely circulated here through the newspapers, and has caused a feeling of dislike to the trade; hence the difficulty the firm has to contend with in getting girls to work in the factory in the filling department. The only restriction in our Act in regard to young persons employed in noxious trades bearing on this industry is contained in the Third Schedule of the Act, and is to the effect that a person under sixteen years of age shall not be employed in the dipping of lucifer matches. In the local factory only men are engaged in mixing the phosphorus, or in dipping the matches. Yet I think something should be done in the interest of the workers engaged in such trades by the appointment of a medical officer to examine these persons periodically, and so guard against the dreaded "phossy jaw." I cannot help thinking that if the disease were to appear here the department would be severely censured, whilst as the law stands we have no more power than in an ordinary work-room. I would say that no young person should obtain a permit to work in the factory without first obtaining the medical officer's certificate, and that all cases of sickness, toothache, &c., be promptly reported to the medical officer. Of course, the appointment of such an officer would mean expense, but I think it would be more than compensated for by the sense of security given to the persons employed in such noxious trades.

The only other trade calling for special notice is that of the compositors, who, through the introduction of the linotype, have been very seriously affected.

I should like to see section 3 of the Act amended so as to bring slaughterhouses again under our jurisdiction. I am sure that boys are employed in many of these places of tender years, who have to work longer hours than those who are under the protection of the Factories Act. Sections 9 to 13 also require amending by the introduction of a clause rendering the occupier of an