

offices are practically useless, but, as attention has been previously drawn to this matter, it is unnecessary for me to say more about it.

Permission was granted to work females 298 hours' overtime during the year.

Two charges were laid against Hastings shopkeepers for failing to give the weekly half-holiday to assistants. A conviction was obtained on one charge and the other was dismissed.

THE SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are only two servants' registry offices in Napier, and, as they are in the hands of very respectable people, I have no trouble with them. I have never heard of any overcharging; in fact, I know that the full legal fees are very rarely charged.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

I have not yet visited any sheep-stations since the introduction of the above-mentioned Act, but will do so during next season. However, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that there is absolutely no benefit in its provisions for the ordinary station-hands, who, I think, require it as much as shearers.

I have, &c.,

L. D. BROWETT, Inspector of Factories.

E. Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

WANGANUI.

Department of Labour, Wanganui, 31st March, 1899.

SIR,— I have the honour to forward to you my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1899.

FACTORIES ACT.

There are 126 factories registered this year, being a decrease of eight on the previous year, employing 725 males and 137 females, making a total of 862 hands, as against 618 males and 150 females, or a total of 768, last year, being an increase of ninety-four.

Permits have been granted to twenty males to work 234 hours' and 101 females to work 1,108 hours' overtime.

Certificates of fitness to work under section 58 have been granted to seventeen boys and eleven girls.

The factories generally are clean and comfortable, and, I think, will compare favourably with those of other districts. The sanitary arrangements are satisfactory.

The employés of both sexes appear to be healthy and well cared for, and are apparently treated with kindness by their employers, and, so far as I can ascertain, are fairly paid for any overtime-work they may do. All factory hands have had a good year, the slack times being much shorter than in former years, the overtime for adult males, particularly in the tailoring and engineering trades, being more plentiful.

The Act, I feel confident, is working well. There have been three prosecutions, conviction being obtained in each case.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act is fully appreciated by employers and employés.

The sanitary arrangements of all the shops where females are employed are, with one exception, all that can be desired. The exception is being attended to.

There have been nine prosecutions during the year, with convictions in eight cases, and one case was dismissed.

As far as I can learn the young people are kindly treated.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Eight certificates under this Act have been issued during the year, being four renewals and four first certificates. I have not had any complaints, and from inquiries I have made I can safely say the Act gives general satisfaction.

LABOUR.

There have been forty-four *bona fide* applications for work. Twenty of these were sent to the Government co-operative works at Mataroa and Utiku, twelve obtained employment in this district, and twelve left for other parts of the colony. About twenty of the class known as "swaggers," when passing through, have called at the office to see if work could be found for them.

The work for unskilled hands has been fairly plentiful, and men with a little go in them and anxious to earn a living have not lost much time.

Tradesmen of all classes, especially carpenters, engineers, bricklayers, and painters, have made nearly full time, and, judging by the way this district is progressing, are likely to have plenty of work for some time to come.

Carpenters and painters have applied for and obtained an increase of wages to the extent of about 1s. per day, carpenters getting 10s. and painters 9s.

In conclusion, I am exceedingly gratified to be able to state that the workers in this district are, with very few exceptions, a sober, respectable, and contented class, and I have no doubt my next report, should I have the honour of making one, will in this respect be no less gratifying.

I have, &c.,

W. G. BLAKE, Inspector of Factories.

E. Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.