

two bootmaking, one cabinetmaking, six tailoring and dressmaking, one tinsmithing, one plumbing, one brickmaking, one engineering, three woolscouring, and one brewing.

I beg to point out that only twenty-two factories were registered in this district during the year 1898; so that an increase of nine has taken place this year. During the past six months ninety-seven males and thirty females have been fully occupied in the factories mentioned, and it has been the generally expressed opinion here that the past year has been the most prosperous for all branches of trade for many years past.

I am pleased to say that there have been no complaints or cause for any prosecutions against any of the factory-owners during the past year. They have all shown a desire to comply with the law, and to treat their employes in a just and liberal manner.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

There are forty-two shops in Temuka district—thirty-five in Temuka, three in Arowhenua, three in Winchester, and one at Orari. There have been no complaints or cause for any prosecutions against any of the shop-owners during the year. The half-holiday and hours of closing are strictly observed by all.

LABOUR.

During harvest operations there was a slight scarcity of labour in the district, and 1s. per hour was freely offered and accepted as the ruling wage in the harvest-field. As winter is now setting in, of course things are quieter; still, there is plenty of work in the district for those who are willing to work—that is, for men who are used to agricultural pursuits. Since the beginning of this year a number of new buildings—shops and dwellings—have been erected in Temuka, which has been the means of giving the various tradesmen full employment.

This district, one of the finest in New Zealand, has its public affairs managed by local Boards; but the inhabitants are now moving to have Temuka proclaimed a borough, which, I respectfully submit, indicates existing prosperity throughout the district.

I have, &c.,

JOHN GILLESPIE, Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

TIMARU.

SIR,—

Labour Bureau Office, Timaru, 31st March, 1899.

I have the honour to forward you a report of the departments under my charge for the year ending the 31st March, 1899.

During the year 104 factories have been registered in this district, and twenty-nine certificates have been issued to young persons under sixteen years of age to work in factories.

A hundred and four permits to work overtime have been granted. I may say that section 55 of the Act in no way gives satisfaction, unless to the employer. In my opinion, and in the opinion of a great many parents of the employes, this section should be abolished, and a clause inserted that no overtime should be allowed except in a special case, such as to execute a mourning order or such-like. When a girl works her eight hours in a factory I consider her day's work should cease, and three hours' overtime on twenty-eight nights in the year (as allowed by the Act) should not exist.

With regard to the sanitary condition of some of the factories in my district, I regret to say a good deal of improvement is yet needed. A number of the buildings are old, and employers are so cramped up for space that it is almost impossible to carry out this part of the Act to the letter.

Speaking generally, the Act is fairly well observed. There have been no prosecutions under the Act during the year, and very few complaints.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS ACT.

This Act is fairly well observed, and most employers as well as employes seem to appreciate the Thursday half-holiday. During the year five prosecutions were instituted. The defendants were all punished in nominal fines and costs.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are only two licensed holders under this Act, both of whom conduct their business in an honest and respectable manner. I have had no complaints about any person being overcharged, neither have I been able to find out any such thing having taken place.

LABOUR-MARKET.

In reporting on the state of labour in this district I am pleased to be able to state there have been fewer applicants registering their names for employment than in the previous year, and work in general has been more easily obtainable. At the time of writing there are no applicants on my books for employment. Work was found through this office for fourteen men on co-operative