

HOKITIKA.

SIR,—

Police-station, Hokitika, 10th April, 1905.

I have the honour to forward my annual report for year ending the 31st March, 1905.

The various Acts relating to factories, shops and offices, &c., are well observed. The employers appear quite as willing to carry out the provisions of the law as the employees, and, judging from the fact that very few employees leave for employment elsewhere, it would appear that they are quite satisfied and content. I have had no complaints.

Thirty-nine factories were registered last year, giving employment to 202 hands.

The district has maintained a steady, if quiet, prosperity. A few small boats are now making regular periodical trips with timber, and have established quite a respectable trade. If the entrance to the river could be deepened to admit large vessels the trade would soon be multiplied a hundredfold.

The land in this part of the colony, which at one time was regarded as of very little value, is now being sought after eagerly. It is found that if not suitable for wheat yet it is suitable in every way for dairy-farming, cattle-grazing, and growing root-crops, and in this respect is equal to land in other parts of the colony for which very large prices have been paid.

The butter factory at the Kokatahi, about twelve miles from Hokitika by a good road, is increasing its output every year of the best factory-butter, and thus retains in the district a large sum of money that was formerly sent away for the imported article. As a natural result, the value of land has increased considerably in this locality. There is now a movement among the farmers in the Arahura Valley also to have a dairy factory.

I am not sure that it is quite within my province to make suggestions in my report, but, as it may have the effect of calling attention to a good payable industry that could be carried on in this district, I give that as my reason for doing so. It has been for some time a matter of surprise that a bacon-curing factory has not been established on the West Coast. The climate is cool and fit in every respect for pig-growing and bacon-curing, and there is a ready and convenient market for its disposal throughout the Coast. At present all the bacon consumed on the Coast is imported, whereas with such suitable surroundings as we possess it should be one of our exports instead of imports, and it would thus become not only, as in the case of the butter-factory, a means of retaining money in the district, but also of bringing outside money into it. I have full confidence that such an industry could be successfully established and maintained on the Coast.

I have, &c.,

WM. FOLLEY,

Inspector of Factories.

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

RANGIORA.

ANNUAL REPORT ON WORKING OF VARIOUS ACTS.

Department of Labour, Rangiora, 11th April, 1905.

I RESPECTFULLY report that there are 75 factories in this district, employing 340 hands—viz., 298 men and boys and 42 women and girls. Very little overtime has been worked during the year, 111 hours being the full amount of overtime worked, and that has been between tailoring, dress-making, and laundrywork. The Act seems to be working very well in this district. On an average I visit all factories once a month, and by doing so I keep well in touch with the workers. In the winter months I find it rather difficult to visit so often, as some of the factories are ten miles from Rangiora, and the roads not fit for bicycle-riding. I further state that I should like to see threshing-machines put under the Factories Act; they seem to me to be factories just as much as sawmills, only they move about from place to place.

Re the working of the Shops and Offices Act: It seems to be working fairly well. Some time after the new Act came into force things seemed to be rather mixed, but that difficulty has now been got over, and everything is getting along fairly well.

There are now no servants' registry offices in this district.

T. A. EVENDEN.

ASHBURTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Ashburton, 31st March, 1905.

I have the honour to forward my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1905.

FACTORIES.

During the year there were 118 factories registered, an increase of 20 on the previous year, employing 687 males and 170 females. Trade, on the whole, has been very good, although the unseasonable weather in the spring was rather hard on some of the shopkeepers, who found they had some difficulty in getting rid of their summer goods. The building trade has been and still continues brisk, and I know of few local men losing much time, except from bad weather. The woollen-works have been well employed, have been working night shifts and also overtime, so as to cope with orders. The freezing-works have also been fairly well employed, considering that it is a business that fluctuates a good deal.