

REEFTON.

SIR,—

Labour Department, Reefton, 25th April, 1908.

I beg to report that the various Acts under the Labour Department have worked satisfactorily during the last twelve months.

The principal source of employment for men in this district is mining. During the last twelve months sufficient men have been available to keep the mines fully manned. The only outcry of unemployed has come from those who are unfit for mining, or who are anxious to obtain outside work on account of their health.

The building trade is very slack, there being far more houses here than there is any demand for. This does not denote a decrease in the number of men at work in the mines, as they are principally single men, which leaves the houses in the district tenantless.

Bootmakers, tailors, dressmakers, and businesses doing a retail trade are all fairly busy; also blacksmiths, wheelwrights, plumbers, and tinsmiths.

Unskilled labour: There is at present an opening for this class of labour on the Reefton-Marue Road construction-work, but the few men who are out of employment here will not accept the work, owing to the rate paid, the cost of getting provisions to the work, and the bad time of the year the work is put in hand, making it improbable that anything like full time could be made.

I have, &c.,

S. J. DEW,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

GREYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Greymouth, 16th April, 1908.

I have the honour to submit, for your consideration, my annual report on the working of this branch of the Department for the year ending the 31st March, 1908.

It is very gratifying to be able to record that the year just closed was one of progress and prosperity for the town and district of Greymouth; evidences of improvement and stability are visible everywhere. There is no better indication of the prosperity of a district than the building trade, as people build when trade is improving, which creates a legitimate demand for increased and improved accommodation for business and domestic requirements. All branches of the building trade showed great activity during the year, and the indications in both town and country point to a continuance of the present briskness.

FATORIES ACT.

There were 139 factories registered during the year, employing 722 persons—viz., 584 males and 138 females.

The Act was well observed, and appears to be giving general satisfaction to all parties working under its provisions.

OVERTIME.

Overtime warrants were issued during the year for 326 males, who worked 8,467 hours; and for 80 females, who worked 4,003 hours; total hours worked, 12,470.

PERMITS.

Permits were issued for 32 young persons—viz., 19 boys and 13 girls.

ACCIDENTS.

There were 4 accidents reported and inquired into during the year, 2 of which occurred to young persons while working at planing and drilling machines, resulting in the loss of one or two fingers in each case. The third happened to a cabinetmaker while working at a planing-machine, by which all the fingers of the left hand were taken off. The fourth occurred to a sawyer, who had the thumb and a portion of the index-finger taken off by a circular saw. None of these accidents could be attributed to defective machinery.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

This Act is working very satisfactorily. The statutory closing-day is well observed, and shopkeepers endeavour to comply with its provisions.

The number of shops registered in the district last year was 153, giving employment to 223 persons—168 males and 55 females. Overtime warrants were issued for 3 males, who worked 120 hours, and for 4 females, who worked 22 hours: total number of hours worked, 142.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There were 2 offices registered under the Act last year. There is only 1 of them open at present, which is satisfactorily conducted by a competent and experienced person. No complaints against the proprietor have ever been made.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

Two sittings of the Arbitration Court were held during the year, the first was chiefly occupied with compensation-for-accident cases, and the other with a case of the Department against the Blackball Coal-miners' Union for a breach of section 15 of the Act, in which a penalty of £75 was inflicted.