

## EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

During the year 116 men were assisted to employment: of these, 87 were single and 29 married, having 101 persons depending on them; 33 were sent to private employment and 83 to Government co-operative works. Work could have been found for fully twice the above number had they been available.

## F A C T O R I E S' A C T.

The number of factories registered during the year was 281, employing 2,071 persons—viz., 1,653 males and 418 females. These figures show an increase of 20 factories and 68 employees over last year's return.

Certificates of fitness to work in factories were issued under section 26 to 37 boys and 27 girls.

The amount of overtime worked by 326 males over the age of sixteen years was 25,188 hours, and by 280 boys under 16 years of age and females 13,362 hours. These figures show a considerable increase on last year's return, especially as regards males over sixteen years of age.

Accidents: Seventeen accidents were reported and inquired into. Fourteen of them were machinery accidents, but in no case was the accident due to faulty machinery. The two most serious accidents happened to boys. One lost a hand in a planing-machine, the other lost both thumbs under a power-press die. There was also a case of a man having two fingers taken off by a circular saw. The other cases were comparatively slight.

There has been some difficulty in enforcing this Act in respect to the weekly half-holiday on Saturday. The electors of the Borough of Invercargill have now decided to observe the half-holiday on Wednesday, but I am afraid that the change will not give entire satisfaction, as under the old system some closed on Saturday and others on Wednesday, and now those who have been accustomed to having their half-holiday on Saturday are more bitter against the Wednesday half-holiday than the others were against Saturday.

Prosecutions: 7 charges were laid for failing to give women and boys the half-holiday on Saturday, 1 for failing to pay wages to a woman for Labour Day, 1 for working a female for more than eight hours and a quarter in one day, 2 for failing to keep a record of wages, &c., 1 for failing to register a factory, and 2 for failing to give girls the annual increases of 3s. per week. In these two cases the arrears of wages (£41) were paid through me, and the charges were withdrawn. Convictions were obtained on all the other charges.

## S H O P S A N D O F F I C E S' A C T.

This Act continues to work well, and there has been little difficulty in enforcing its provisions. The schedule of working-hours in the Amendment Act of 1905 confers comparatively little benefit on the females employed in refreshment-rooms. Girls can be legally employed for a period of nine or eleven hours, as the case may be, between the hours of 7 o'clock in the morning and 12.15 a.m. of the following day. Many of the girls have to go to their homes, often at a considerable distance from their place of business. In cases like these, where girls do not sleep on the premises but have to go to their homes each night, it would be conducive to health and morals if their working-hours were not later than 11 p.m.

Returns were collected from 270 shops, showing that 884 hands were employed—viz., 652 males and 232 females. This showed an increase of 8 shops and 78 employees over last year's return.

There has not been a great deal of overtime worked; the figures were—males, 2,244 hours; females, 158 hours.

## I N D U S T R I A L C O N C I L I A T I O N A N D A R B I T R A T I O N A C T.

There are at present 18 awards and 4 industrial agreements in operation in this district. Many of the parties affected by the various awards and agreements are scattered all over the district—for instance, a complaint of a breach of the Sawmill Workers' award necessitated a trip to Stewart Island, where, on account of its being the winter season, I was detained for a week. Complaints from coal-miners have several times taken me to Nightcaps. The Gold-dredgemen's award necessitated visits to Waimumu, Carlton Creek, Waikaka, and Waikaia. The Tailors' and Tailoresses' awards have taken me to Gore, Mataura, Wyndham, Riverton, Otautau, and Winton. The Bakers', Carpenters', and other awards require similar periodical visits to all quarters of the district. Nineteen charges were laid, 3 of which were dismissed, while penalties and costs were imposed in 15, and in 1 case costs only were imposed. Several of the charges were for breaches of the apprentices clauses of the Tailoresses' award—i.e., employing apprentices in excess of the proportion stipulated. These breaches were no doubt due to the shortage of journeywomen. In the other cases I do not think there is any possible excuse for the breaches. The penalties and costs imposed amounted to £58 13s. 10d.

## S E R V A N T S' R E G I S T R Y O F F I C E S' A C T.

There are 9 registry offices in Invercargill. I have had practically no trouble with any office this year. The reduction of the fee chargeable to workers, with the comparatively small demand for flax-mill hands, has seriously affected this business for those that were making a leading line of it.

I have, &c.,

L. D. BROWETT,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.