

emporium than a chemist's. A test case was brought in Wellington, but the Stipendiary Magistrate decided against the department, holding that brushes, combs, and other articles were a part of a chemist's usual stock in trade. If this be good law, it is very hard to decide where a chemist's legitimate business begins and ends. The total number of prosecutions were forty-six, five being dismissed and forty-one decided in favour of the department. Wellington contributed thirteen, twelve being in favour of the department and one dismissed.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICE ACT.

This Act has been of immense service to domestic-servants and others in limiting the amount chargeable as a fee. There used to be great complaints made of the extortionate rates charged by some registry-office keepers. A marked improvement is the result of the Act. I am convinced that in many cases the law is deliberately violated, but it is very difficult to obtain proof. Girls who have been victimised are reluctant to give evidence, as they think that in the event of their wanting another situation they might be boycotted by registry-office keepers as a body. There have been two convictions under the Act, both being in Dunedin.

The women's branch of the department, which was started by the Hon. W. P. Reeves as an experiment, to see what support would be accorded to it, still continues, and has during the last few months gained greatly in public favour. To endeavour to extend its utility still further, it is proposed to remove the office to a more central position in the town, and also to keep it open for business during the evening.

STATE FARM.

The farm consists of 800 acres of flat land, being part of the Horowhenua Block, and is about one mile and a half from the Levin Railway-station. Operations were started on the 28th February, 1894, the whole of the land being then covered with dense bush. There is now some 500 acres felled and grassed, a large portion of it being also logged up. This is an increase of 100 acres under grass since last year. The land cropped during the year consisted of 15 acres in oats, 5 acres in turnips and mangles, 8 acres in potatoes, 1 acre in vines, pumpkins, marrows, &c.; the yields being, oats equal to 42 bushels per acre, potatoes 13 tons to the acre, while the turnips and mangles yielded a fairly good crop. The whole of the 2,000 fruit-trees show splendid progress, and, if all goes well, next season should give a very good yield, for which I hope we will find a profitable market. The potatoes have been selling at fair prices. They are being put in pits, and, no doubt, as the winter goes on higher prices will be realised. Other produce has been sold, all at satisfactory prices.

During the year a large expenditure has been incurred in the purchase of stock. By taking advantage of the markets they were purchased at fairly low prices, and those turned off as fat stock have returned a handsome profit. Another ninety head will be ready for the butcher in a few months, just at the time when prices are, as a rule, high for fat stock. It is proposed to purchase another thirty or forty cows, so as to have them in for milk during the next season. This will give a large amount of work to women and old men. It is proposed to do this work on shares, which, in my opinion, will be the most satisfactory way. I am at present making arrangements with the Farmers' Dairy Union *re* the milk. There are now something like 120 to 130 pigs on the farm, some of which are being turned off to the butcher every week, and replaced by other stores. We have not yet attempted bacon-curing, but have no doubt that as we get on this will ultimately be undertaken. We have also started bee-keeping, and intend to develop this industry to a large extent. Fowls are also to be added in the near future; all these occupations being peculiarly suited to the class of men we have on the place, the majority being elderly men past the prime of their days, but who yet are quite able to do orchard-work, pig-feeding, milking, bee- and poultry-rearing, &c. During the year we have been enabled to get a large area of ground cleared by means of the sales of firewood, the current rates being paid to the men for splitting, and the current rate being charged to the purchaser. Some little agitation against this was made, but work had to be provided for the men during the winter, and so long as the Government did not undersell I could not see any objection to it. If it had not been for this many more men would have been unemployed and wandering the streets of Wellington and elsewhere. Appended is a table which shows the number of men employed during the year, also the number of families and dependents. A new stable and store-room has been built during the year. A large quantity of fencing has been done, stockyards erected, and some hundreds of walnut, ash, elm, and larch and other trees planted for shelter and future profit; road-making and -metalling, well-digging, erection of windmills, building cottages, besides all the hundred and one jobs that are incidental to the work of a farm. It has been asserted by some that all the money has been going out and none coming in. The only answer I can give to that is to say that the farm last year paid good interest on the cash outlay. This year it will not be quite so good, for one reason, that the returns from a very large portion of the expenditure will not be in till 1896-97—viz., cattle, pigs, bees, &c. Authority has been given by the Hon. the Minister to build four new cottages, which will enable us to dispense with four of the worst of the temporary cottages which the people have been living in. As circumstances admit others will be built.

I have on many occasions pleaded for more of these farms to be established, and now that the Levin one is past the experimental stage I am sure that others, established on the same lines, would be of great benefit to the Government as one means of reducing the charitable-aid expenditure. There are men on the Levin farm who, if not there, would be living at the expense of the taxpayer. As it is, they are paid a small sum per day for their labour, and are therefore free from that degrading feeling which is inseparable from charity when no equivalent is given in return. We shall be enabled, now that most of the heavy work is done, to employ more of this class of labour. There is also another class that State farms are peculiarly suited for—viz., young able-bodied men