

who have been brought up as clerks, shop-assistants, &c., but who, from the intense competition that exists in these occupations, have been thrown out of employment. They are willing to tackle manual labour, but have no knowledge, therefore contractors and others are chary of employing them. We can put them on the farm, paying them what they are worth. In a few months' time they will have gained sufficient knowledge to go out and undertake any work for private employers. This would have the effect of taking off the streets of our cities hundreds of men who at present we do not know what to do with.

I may say, in conclusion, that a short time ago a well-known land expert, who occupies a high position, paid a visit to the farm, and said, if the Government were to cut it up and sell in small areas, the price paid would recoup the Government for all its outlay.

LIST OF MEN EMPLOYED (STATE FARM).

April,	1895	...	...	37	October, 1895	...	...	39
May,	"	...	...	40	November, "	...	...	35
June,	"	...	...	46	December, "	...	...	26
July,	"	...	...	47	January, 1896	...	...	25
August,	"	...	...	49	February, "	...	...	27
September,	"	...	...	44	March, "	...	...	30

E. Tregear, Esq.

J. MACKAY.

SIR,—

Labour Department, 20th April, 1896.

I have the honour to report that, under instructions from the Hon. W. P. Reeves, on the 1st April, 1895, I took charge of the women's branch of the Labour Department, which I held up to the time of my appointment as Inspector of Factories. I was then succeeded by Mrs. Staveley. I regret that during the eight months for which I was in charge I cannot report the amount of success which I consider the undertaking merits. During that time there were 362 women and girls applying for employment, which to my mind proves the necessity of having such an office for women. At that time the Bureau was not much patronised by employers of female labour; but, through the sending out of circulars, and a little advertising, it seems to be gradually growing in favour with those requiring women labour. Of course, domestic servants at the present time are a class of workers who are very difficult to deal with, the reasons being many and obvious—such as small wages, overwork, and very little comfort. Seldom or never have they any social life within the walls of the houses where they are employed. In fact, the position of a general servant is a very isolated one indeed. Domestic service is unattractive, as compared with the life of the factory-workers. Our factory-worker has her half-holiday once a week, all day on Sunday, and a number of public holidays during the year, and usually the comforts of a mother's home. All these privileges the servant-girls are denied, consequently they are continually changing about from place to place, thus making it very difficult to give a correct estimate of the number of unemployed women in the city; but I believe there are a great many at present. Domestic servants require to be well organized, and a good domestic training-class should be established, which I am sure would prove of inestimable value to both mistress and maid. Young girls going out to service seldom have the experience required, yet they must earn something, for, as a rule, they have to help with the support of younger brothers and sisters, and, through lack of method or system, their work is rendered doubly difficult. This is a matter that could easily be settled by mistresses, and, if once established, would render homes much more happy.

Since my appointment as Inspector of Factories, and acting under instructions from you, I have visited factories and workrooms where women are employed in the industrial centres of both islands and country districts. Speaking generally, I have to report that I have found the condition of these workers fairly satisfactory. The workrooms of Dunedin, Christchurch, and many of the small towns of the South Island are, as a rule, well-ventilated roomy apartments, those of Auckland coming next. Wellington is labouring under many disadvantages, such as places which are now being used as workrooms were never intended as such, scarcity of building-ground, &c. While in Auckland I must state that I was very much struck with the very high percentage of young girls employed in the factories and workshops. Girls of sixteen or eighteen years are occupied and are carrying out the same lines of work as women of twenty-five or thirty seem to do in other centres. I spoke to many employers on this matter, and the reply invariably was that they were not in the habit of dismissing their hands, but that they could not get older women to continue at the work; so it just suggested to my mind that probably the wages offered were too small to induce women of mature age to follow up their occupation. I believe this to be an important point, and would commend it to your careful consideration. Of women employed in all the different trades, tailoresses seem the most comfortable. Among these there are much individuality and self-reliance displayed, and so also it is with girls employed at the boot trades. This, of course, can be accounted for through the fact that they are more closely associated with men, and in most centres they have the protection of their unions. In the South Island especially these workers are very strong and well united. Moreover, the employment of tailoresses and women working at the boot trade is more constant than that of women at other trades, such as dressmaking, &c., and the wages of a tailoress is considerably better than that of the average dressmaker. Dressmakers are indeed suffering very much through the fact that there is no uniformity or organization among them, and among this class of workers is much to be observed a great lack of that personality or businesslike tact which is so necessary among women who have to work for their living.