

In visiting the woollen mills, I must say that without exception I was much pleased with the condition of the workers. These workrooms are clean, well ventilated, and lofty. I notice that women attending looms, &c., are kept constantly standing, and, as it is known to be injurious to the health of women to be kept standing for such lengthened periods, I would suggest that some provision be made whereby persons so employed should be enabled to rest for at least ten minutes morning and afternoon. Laundry-women are also subject to much of this long standing.

Sanitary conveniences in country districts are not all that could be desired, and there is still much need for watchful supervision on the part of local inspectors to guard against breaches of the law in this respect.

E. Tregear, Esq.

MARGARET SCOTT, Inspector of Factories.

SIR,—

Women's Branch, Labour Department, 10th April, 1896.

I have the honour to report that, under instructions from the Hon. W. P. Reeves, I took charge of the women's branch of the Labour Department on the 12th November, 1895, when my predecessor, Miss Margaret Scott, was appointed Factory Inspector. During that time 205 women have applied here seeking for employment. Seventy-seven employers called, of whom forty-nine have been supplied with women or girls to help in household work. There are many women still waiting to get employment, a large percentage of whom are charwomen. They are in poor circumstances, they tell me their husbands are delicate or cannot get work. A good many of them are widows. All of them have families to support, in many cases very young children who are quite unable to earn a living for themselves.

I have made it a point during the time I have been here to notice particularly the relations existing between mistress and maid, and I regret to say they seem anything but satisfactory. A good deal of the remedy for such a state of things is with the mistresses, if they only could be induced to take a little more interest in the welfare and comfort of their maids. I feel sure they would be amply repaid for the trouble by the increased diligence, deftness, and cheerfulness of their servants. The servants themselves (with many excellent exceptions) are most incompetent. They leave school, and, as they have to contribute their mite to the general fund, they set about getting a situation, when their utter ignorance of the most ordinary household duties drive their mistresses nearly distracted. The small opportunities their mothers have of teaching them the work required to be done in the most humble homes they often will not avail themselves of. They think domestic duties can be picked up and learned at any time without practice. Under such circumstances it is impossible for them to do well, let alone excel in such a very essential branch of labour. I think it is a great pity that young girls cannot get some sort of practical training before they enter service. If they were placed where they had certain duties assigned to them, and were expected to do them well, they would get confidence in themselves, and have pleasure in performing their work properly. It would be a great boon to employers of domestic servants, and, indeed, to the public at large, and I feel sure employers with few exceptions would be ready and willing to pay fair wages for work well done.

The number of women and girls who have called at the Labour Bureau seeking employment is 567, the number of employers 172, and the number of mistresses supplied 112.

E. Tregear, Esq.

HELEN STAVELEY, Officer in Charge.

#### AUCKLAND.

Department of Labour, Auckland, 31st March, 1896.

SIR,—

I beg to submit, for your information, a report of the departments under my charge during the past year.

#### LABOUR.

Since my last report, dated the 31st March, 1895, 243 men have been assisted to work through the Bureau, of whom 177 were married, with 765 persons dependent on them, and 66 single. Of these, 54 were sent to private works and 189 to Government works.

Through being enabled to send men seeking work to the different sources of employment open, the "unemployed" difficulty was fairly overcome, and the year passed over in comparative quietness. The goldfields gave a good opening to miners and practical workmen, but unfortunately caused an influx of unsuitable workmen, who, being unfitted for the work, drifted to town. Tradesmen, on the whole, had a better year than for some time past. Between Government and private work, I do not think that good men had much idle time.

I lately made a tour of inspection through the principal co-operative works carried on by the Public Works Department. In all instances the workmen expressed satisfaction with their treatment and the officers in charge. Payment is based on a scale not to exceed current wages, and it takes good workmen to work hard to earn this. The work done is highly creditable to all concerned—buildings, cuttings (rock and earth), and various formations having been completed in a thorough and workmanlike manner, and, from information I received, comparing favourably in cost to similar work let by contract.

The working-class are now looking anxiously to the land settlement, in the hopes of securing a permanent home.

#### FACTORIES.

For this year 566 factories have been registered, employing 5,649 hands—3,908 males and 1,741 females, this being an addition to last year of 121 factories and 1,045 persons.

Permits to work have been granted, under clause 58, to 293 persons under the age of sixteen years. The stipulation that these young persons must have passed the Fourth Standard at school