

ever they did in the old land, and these people keep on writing home for others, and so the circle keeps widening. One man of the original party has brought out over twenty people himself, and they are, as far as we know, all doing well.

Large numbers of people arrived during the summer months from England, Canada, and the United States. Most of these succeeded in getting employment from Wellington; others were booked to different parts of the colony, and our agents were instructed to give them every assistance towards obtaining suitable employment. Several new arrivals simply turned round and went back to England, which, in my opinion, was better so, as they were totally unsuited for colonial life; having been brought up to clerical and other light employment, they had neither the physique nor the pluck to tackle something else.

As to persons emigrating to New Zealand. It seems to me that some one should be at the other end, thoroughly up to date as to the sort of labour that is mostly required in New Zealand, also one who has had great and varied experience in colonial life, and who would be able to judge by examination and personal appearance as to whether the proposed emigrants would be fit persons to come here. Many of the arrivals are totally unsuitable, but, of course, these do not all go through the Home New Zealand Government Agents, therefore in many cases no check can be applied.

Employment generally throughout the year has been good, and little difficulty has been experienced in finding employment for those who applied during the winter months of 1904. A block of bush was given to the Department as a means of disposing of surplus labour, but we did not avail ourselves of it to any great extent, owing to its situation which made it extremely difficult to get at, thus entailing considerable cost of transport. If something similar has to be done during 1905 it would be advisable to have it where there are reasonable means of access. Taking the period from beginning to end work has been fairly plentiful, and in the dairying season hands were very scarce. The young colonial of to-day does not seem to like the idea of going up-country, preferring the attraction of city life.

During the year the Wellington office assisted to Government and private employment 211 married men and 719 single, with 710 dependants. For the whole colony we assisted 953 married and 2,177 single men, with 3,425 dependants.

FACTORIES ACT.

This Act continued to give general satisfaction, and very little trouble is encountered in administering its provisions. There is one thing which I would like to bring under your notice, which, in my opinion, is a most important one—viz., the desirability of amending the Act in the direction of making it compulsory for an employer to give a girl or boy leaving his employ a certificate showing how long she or he has been in his employment. This is beginning to be found absolutely necessary in view of the requirements of section 31 of the Act of 1901, and section 3 of the Amendment Act, 1902. When a woman or young person has to be given a regular yearly increase of salary great difficulty sometimes has been experienced in tracing the various periods a worker has been employed, so as to arrive at a proper estimate as to what amount she is entitled to receive as wages. With the certificate no trouble would ensue, as each employer would note on the certificate when he or she started to work, and the date the worker left. I trust something will be done, as the present system, or want of system, is a source of great annoyance to the Department, the employer, and the employee.

The sanitary conditions of factories in New Zealand have greatly improved during the last few years, good, comfortable, well-lit, and well-ventilated premises with all conveniences required being the rule instead of, as formerly, the exception. Employers are finding it is to their own benefit to have their hands comfortably housed during working-hours. A scarcity of women workers in various lines was experienced during the year.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

At the time of writing very little can be said about this Act, excepting that its general provisions are being fairly well carried out. Section 3 is at present inoperative, awaiting the decision of the Supreme Court.

THE INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

This Act has increased the work of the Department considerably, as owing to the amendment of 1903, and also the attitude the Court has taken against unions bringing breaches of awards before it, it has practically doubled the work of Inspectors; but I think the change is a good one, as we, having facilities which are denied to union officials, obtain information which puts the matter in dispute in quite a different light, and leads in many cases to an amicable settlement being made, thus avoiding unnecessary and vexatious litigation.

The number of breaches of award investigated by our Inspectors throughout the colony and ultimately taken to Court totalled 295, divided among the individual districts as follows:—

	Number of Cases.	Decided in Favour.	Dismissed.	Withdrawn.
Auckland	39	29	7	3
Taranaki	4	4	0	0
Wellington	151	126	21	4
Canterbury	48	39	5	4
Otago and Southland	53	34	18	1
Totals	295	232	51	12