

It will be seen from the above table that the minimum wages fixed by industrial agreements are often higher, proportionately, than those fixed in awards of the Arbitration Court, but this would appear to be due to the factors above mentioned. The Court has, in fact, recently laid down the principle that the wages of skilled workers should be about 25 per cent. more than those of unskilled hands—viz., 1s. 7½d. and 1s. 3½d. per hour—and several of the awards made during 1919 are based on this principle.

*Men's Employment Bureaux.*

Since the establishment of the Department in 1891 the following have been assisted :—

Year.	Total.	Married.	Single.	Dependants.	Sent to Private Employment.	Sent to Government Works.
1891-1918 (twenty-eight years) ..	121,420	42,873	78,547	156,636	56,454	64,966
1918-19 .. .. .	3,199	880	2,319	3,005	1,618	1,581
	124,619	43,753	80,866	159,641	58,072	66,547

*Women's Employment Bureaux.*

The number of domestic and other female workers assisted was as follows :—

Place.	Number of Engagements made for Charwomen and other Day-workers.		Number of other Engagements by Employers and Workers completed during the Year.	Number of other Persons assisted by Reduced Fares only during the Year.	Total Number assisted.
	(a.) Those employed for One Day or Half-day only.	(b.) Those employed for One Day or Half-day for continuous Weeks or other Periods.			
Auckland .. .. .	..	116	268	..	384
Wellington .. .. .	48	290	208	19	565
Nelson .. .. .	4	6	70	..	80
Christchurch .. .. .	57	91	122	4	274
Dunedin .. .. .	15	28	206	..	249
Totals .. .. .	124	531	874	23	1,552

This is 140 less than the number assisted in the previous twelve months, which was in turn some 265 less than in the preceding year. The fall in the number of servants placed is therefore as great as 20·69 in the two years. This large decrease is, as is well known, due to the continued shortage of domestic workers. The officers in charge of the several bureaux again call attention in their reports to the urgent demand for domestic workers to assist housewives in coping with their work. The unsatisfied demand for help comes almost entirely from women with young children, whose incomes are barely sufficient to pay the high wages required, even were servants obtainable.

As the above figures show, in Wellington some of the most urgent needs of housewives have been met by the supplying of charwomen and other daily workers. As the engagements are generally made for only a day or even half a day at a time a great amount of work is involved at the bureau. Even this kind of help has, however, proved of great assistance to householders.

The best solution of the domestic-worker question appears to be that mentioned in last year's report and which I again refer to on page 24 of this report, respecting the housing question and communal kitchens and laundries.

FACTORIES ACT.

The following statement shows the movement in regard to the number of factories and factory workers during the past six years :—

Year.	Factories.	Movement.	Factory Workers.	Movement.
1913-14 (before the war) ..	13,469	94 (increase)	87,517	919 (increase).
1914-15 .. .. .	13,937	468 "	88,812	1,295 "
1915-16 (since the war began) ..	13,214	723 (decrease)	83,011	5,801 (decrease).
1916-17 .. .. .	12,455	759 "	78,188	4,823 "
1917-18 .. .. .	12,485	30 (increase)	79,653	1,465 (increase).
1918-19 .. .. .	12,444	41 (decrease)	82,783	3,130 "

The increase in the number of employees is probably due to the fact that positions occupied by men called up under the Military Service Act were largely filled by juniors and girls.