

environments improved, girls have not been available. The town mistress welcomes and utilizes largely the day-worker, but the country mistress is debarred from even this assistance on account of distance. Only a small number of immigrants have called at the office during the year.

Pea, fruit, and hop picking: As is usual in this district a large number of women workers has earned a comparative independence at pea, fruit, and hop picking, for which the weather and crops have been exceptionally good. Even in these industries growers complained of the difficulty of obtaining labour.

Dressmaking and tailoring: The dearth of girls willing to learn these trades has grown remarkably, and employers find it impossible to cope with orders.

Jam-preserving and biscuit and confectionery manufacturing: Quite a large number of women workers is needed each year for these factories, and a large amount of fruit has not been handled on account of the scarcity of workers.

During the year 525 applications have been received from employers and 132 from workers seeking employment. 116 of the latter were placed in suitable employment.

I have, &c.,

M. EMERSON,

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

Officer in Charge.

CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,— Department of Labour (Women's Branch), Christchurch, 25th April, 1913.

I have the honour to submit my report on the working of the above branch of the Department during the year ending the 31st March, 1913.

There have been 2,777 applications received from employers and 493 from employees. Of the latter, 427 have been found suitable employment, 45 of whom were married and 382 single women.

Compared with last year, there has been a decrease in the number assisted, but this is not surprising, as the difficulty in securing help of any kind is becoming daily more and more keenly felt. Higher wages have been offered to induce girls to accept positions, but only a very small percentage of help could be obtained in comparison with the demand. It has been equally hard to obtain women workers for other branches, especially for dressmaking and laundry-work. Great demands have been made for the latter, as, owing to the scarcity of domestics, people have been compelled to send their laundry-work out. There has been no difficulty in getting employment for women and girls, except for a class for whom it is always difficult to find employment—viz., those whose demands are too exacting. The majority of the workers have endeavoured to obtain positions in private homes or public institutions in or near the city, so that country residents requiring help have been put to great inconvenience through not being able to obtain it. Mistresses from these parts would willingly take inexperienced girls, train them, and pay them high wages, but they are not available.

Constant inquiries about "Home" girls have been made at the office, and the arrival of vessels is eagerly looked for. Those girls who have called have been at once placed in good positions, and have often returned to express gratitude for what has been done for them. With few exceptions, these girls have given satisfaction.

Great inconvenience has been caused at times by employers and employees omitting to notify us when they have been suited elsewhere. The remedy adopted in case of girls who, after making an engagement, disappoint an employer is to strike their names off the cards, unless a reasonable excuse is given.

The following is a summary of the business done during the year:—

Applications from Employers, 1912-13.

Domestic workers	...	...	...	...	...	991
Girls to assist	...	...	...	...	...	129
Cooks and cook-generals	...	...	...	...	...	490
House and house-parlour maids	...	...	...	...	...	478
Housekeepers	...	...	...	...	...	84
Waitresses	...	...	...	...	...	111
Lady-helps	...	...	...	...	...	113
Married couples	...	...	...	...	...	116
Nurses	...	...	...	...	...	63
Kitchen and pantry maids	...	...	...	...	...	92
Charwomen	...	...	...	...	...	28
Laundresses	...	...	...	...	...	67
Machinists	...	...	...	...	...	10
Seamstresses	...	...	...	...	...	2
Barmaids	...	...	...	...	...	2
Governess	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total	...	...	...	...	...	2,777