

under the Native relief contracts is enforced on "standard work" contracts, and it is only when the Native registers after having been off relief over three months that the usual two weeks' requalifying period is enforced.

If the Native Department is unable to provide employment for all registered Maoris, every endeavour is made to place them per medium of the Public Works Department or with local authorities or other employing bodies, and to make special arrangements to provide light work for those unfitted for ordinary manual labour.

UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Assistance is granted to unemployed women and girls through the medium of Women's Employment Committees, which committees carry out their work on a voluntary basis and are representative mainly of the various women's social organizations. These committees operate to any extent in the four main centres only, where registered unemployed women and girls are assisted in obtaining employment, and are granted a measure of relief while they are unemployed.

The work performed by the Women's Employment Committees has been very efficiently carried out, and the Department is indebted to them for the time and care given to the administration of the functions entrusted to them in the disbursement of relief to women. In the event of any major developments in the matter of payment of relief or other benefits to women, special departmental organization would possibly require to be set up to deal with the problem rather than to increase the existing number of committees. The experience gained from the able administration of the committees would prove invaluable to the Department in dealing with extended benefits to women.

The relief assistance granted to registered and eligible unemployed women and girls is by way of a cash payment of 10s. per week, increased to 14s. per week where the recipient is living away from home. In addition, a substantial measure of assistance is granted by way of free meals, clothing, &c.

Work centres have been established in some of the main centres where those registered as unemployed are assisted to qualify for employment by training in cooking, sewing, and domestic work generally.

During the financial year ended 31st March, 1937, grants totalling £10,203 were made to the various Women's Employment Committees from the Employment Promotion Fund.

The following table sets out the occupations by age-groups of those unemployed women and girls registered at the four main centres as at 31st July, 1937. The total of 238 registrations shows a decline of eighty-seven when compared with the total of 325 registered at 31st July, 1936.

Occupations and Ages of Unemployed Women and Girls registered at the Four Main Centres as at 31st July, 1937.

Usual Occupations.	16-19 Years.	20-24 Years.	25-29 Years.	30-39 Years.	40-49 Years.	50-59 Years.	60 Years and over.	Total.
Office work	..	3	1	4	5	2	..	15
Shop-assistants ..	2	6	2	1	2	..	1	14
Factory employees ..	8	12	2	1	1	..	1	25
Dressmakers or tailoresses	1	2	..	..	3	2	..	8
Milliners	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Housemaids	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	2
Waitresses	1	2	1	..	..	..	..	4
Cooks	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	3
Laundresses	..	1	..	1	2	1	..	5
Charwomen	..	..	..	2	9	10	..	21
Domestics	9	23	13	20	33	26	2	126
Nurses (trained) ..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	2
Nurses (children's) ..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	2
Housekeepers	..	..	..	1	..	2	..	3
Others	..	2	..	..	..	5	..	7
Total	21	53	19	34	57	50	4	238

During the year ended 31st July, 1937, 744 temporary and 1,338 permanent placements in private employment were effected by the committees, 67,117 meals were supplied to unemployed women and girls, and, in addition, 421 garments and 24 articles of footwear were provided in necessitous cases.

The table set out above provides ample evidence that the female unemployment problem at the present time is not a serious one. It will be noted that approximately 50 per cent. of those registered are over forty years of age, and a considerable proportion of these would in all probability experience difficulty in securing permanent positions even in the most prosperous times. In addition, it was estimated by the committees that at least 84 persons, or over 30 per cent., of the above total of 238, could safely be regarded as permanently unemployable due to physical unfitness, &c.