

539. The necessary legislative authority was then taken in the Employment Act to empower the Department to—

Provide a Home Aid Service, by making the services of workers employed in the Department available for domestic and other work in cases of emergency and in other special circumstances, and to make such charges as may be fixed by the Minister for any services provided for any person by the Department.

540. The main provisions of the Service as finally agreed upon are set out in the following :—

*Administration.*—The Service is administered by the Head Office of this Department, which has appointed to its staff a woman Superintendent of Home Aids. The actual operation of the Service is carried out by the Department's district offices, in each of which a woman District Organizer is appointed.

*Conditions of Employment of Aids.*—One of the major differences between the New Zealand Home Aid Service and Services of a similar nature which have been operated in this country and elsewhere, such as the Home Service Associations and other employment agencies of a like type, is that the New Zealand Home Aids are full-time State employees and enjoy the same privileges as other public servants in the matter of annual leave, sick-leave, and superannuation. As departmental employees, the Aids are paid by the Department, which recovers from householders the fees charged for their services.

*Status of Home Aids.*—Another feature of the New Zealand Home Aid Service which is at present unique is the status accorded to Home Aids. They are not regarded as of what might be termed a menial status, but are looked upon more in the same way as companion-helps, taking their meals with the family and being otherwise treated in the same way as members of the family would expect to be treated. In this connection, however, it is clearly understood that their duties are not necessarily limited to those of a light nature. They may be called upon to perform all the ordinary tasks of a household. Whilst employed in the household they must carry out the reasonable directions of the lady of the house or other person in charge.

*Priorities.*—In the meantime, and pending further expansion of the Service, regard is had to certain priorities in the allocation of Aids to applicants for their services. Providing that all priority cases can be met, other types of cases will then receive consideration and allocations of Home Aids be made accordingly. The priorities observed are as follows :—

- (a) Cases where there are one or more children under twelve years of age permanently residing in a home and where the mother or other woman in charge of the home is wholly or partially incapacitated from undertaking her ordinary domestic duties by reason of pregnancy or maternity, or by reason of accident, sickness, or infirmity of any kind :
- (b) Cases where there are three or more children under twelve years of age permanently residing in the home, and any member of the household requires special care and attention by reason of sickness or infirmity :
- (c) Cases where all the members of a household of an age or condition to help in the home are wholly or partially incapacitated from work by sickness or otherwise :
- (d) Cases where the lack of domestic assistance in the home is a cause of undue hardship.

*Hours of Work.*—The Home Aids work an eight-hour day and a forty-hour week. Their travelling-expenses to and from the various jobs to which they are allocated are paid by the Department. In general, "live-in" engagements are discouraged, but allocations on this basis are made when unavoidable. Individual jobs may extend from an odd half-day up to a full-time forty-hour-week service extending over two or three weeks, or perhaps even longer in special cases.

*Charges for Service.*—A flat rate of 2s. per hour is payable by the householder to the Department for the services of the Home Aid, irrespective of the period for which assistance is provided. In view of the additional hours of duty there is no reduction in this charge for "live-in" engagements, which, as already stated, are only approved when absolutely unavoidable. Whether the engagement is a "live-in" one or not, however, the Department has authority to approve of reductions in the full charge of 2s. per hour when payment at the full rate would create undue hardship. The Department accepts responsibility for any injuries incurred by Home Aids which arise out of or in the course of their employment, and it is not necessary for householders to arrange for compensation insurance cover.

*Classes of Aids and Salary Rates.*—Aids proved to be capable of taking full charge of a household and carrying out all necessary duties are classified as Diploma Holders and receive a salary from the Department of £4 gross per week. Aids who have not quite reached this standard but are capable of carrying out all ordinary household duties are classified as Certificate Holders and receive a salary of £3 10s. gross. Trainees, being persons in training who have not reached certificate standard, receive a salary of £2 10s. per week gross during the period of their training. All classes of Home Aids are provided by the Department with a badge and with free uniforms for wearing on the job.