

should return the fee, which of course would be very unfair, considering the trouble and inconvenience that has been caused both to the office-keeper and to the customer (the mistress).

Complaint is constantly being made of the excessive number of hours which waitresses are compelled to work in restaurants and refreshment-rooms, which do not come under our care; also, of the very inferior sleeping-accommodation which is generally provided for this class of servant. I feel sure that if something were done in the direction of looking after the accommodation provided for domestic servants in general the whole colony would benefit very much by it, and we would hear less of girls preferring to go into factories.

I have, &c.,

MARGARET SCOTT HAWTHORNE, Inspector of Factories.

E. Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector of Factories.

Department of Labour, Women's Branch, Wellington,

19th April, 1900.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit to you my report for the year ended the 31st March, 1900.

The number of women and girls who have been suited with work is 346.

Domestic work seems each year to grow more distasteful to working-girls. They prefer factory-work, laundry-work, no matter how small the weekly pay is, to good domestic work where the pay is better and they are found in board and lodgings as well, not to speak of the benefit derived by themselves in the knowledge obtained when they get homes of their own. I wish I knew what to suggest to make domestic work more attractive to young girls so as to induce them to take an intelligent interest in what so much concerns their own future welfare. I know that a great deal could be done by letting girls see the result of housework well done—cooking, washing, house-cleaning, personal cleanliness, value of time, laws of health, sanitary laws, &c., all of which are so closely woven in our every-day lives, and then there would be none of those foolish ideas about domestic work not being genteel (an outcome of their home training very often). If mothers of girls could only be brought to see for themselves the importance of this matter the greater part of the difficulty would be overcome. Some mistresses, who only keep one maid, work with her during the morning hours, and under such circumstances a girl will become very proficient, her mistress working with her making all the difference in her performance of the work; by this means matters domestic in such a house move along with the smoothness of oiled wheels. Others again will not do anything to help their maids, and the perpetual hurrying and trying to do what is impossible wears a girl out. Unreasonable, inexperienced mistresses and untrained servants are what bring domestic service into such bad repute with intelligent domestic workers. There are some to be found, but they mostly find their interests are better served by going to hotels or large houses where a number of servants are kept. Girls often complain to me of the long hours they have to work at restaurants and refreshment places, and of the bad sleeping-accommodation afforded, whilst those who sleep off the premises get away at an hour when they should not be in the streets. I hope by calling your attention to the matter to see an improvement in their condition.

So scarce have servants become that even the old women who used to be rather a trouble to the office have found employment—nearly all of them in the country. Some girls give a deal of trouble by engaging in places and never turning up at the time promised; a fine of some sort should be imposed, as such practices cause great inconvenience to employers. If an employer fails to take a girl after having engaged her, he has to give her a week's pay.

I have, &c.,

HELEN STAVELEY, Officer in Charge.

E. Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector of Factories.

### CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Christchurch, 31st March, 1900.

I have the honour to present my report of the work of this branch of the department for the year now closed.

#### LABOUR.

The term under review has been particularly good, especially among skilled trades, with the exception of the boot and shoe trade. In this industry there was no very perceptible improvement until the last two months of the year, when work improved, and the men made much better time. The engineering and iron trades have been exceedingly busy all through the year. The building trade has been even more active than during last year, the employés in this trade having been kept fully employed, and there is every likelihood of a continuance of the present prosperity. The cabinetmaking firms have had great difficulty in getting suitable hands to cope with the demands of the trade. The tanneries and wool-scouring works have had an exceptionally good year. The tailoring, clothing, and dressmaking workrooms have been more than usually busy. The woollen-mills have not been able to overtake the demand for their manufactures.

The unskilled-labour market has been of a most satisfactory character, there having been fewer applications for employment than at any period since this branch of the department was opened. Many of this class who previously had to come to the Government for work have found other avenues of employment, due in a great measure to the increased activity in the building and other trades. A good number have been employed for long periods at street and other improvements in the city and suburban boroughs, and a great many found profitable employment at the