

One of these resolutions (No. 2) has been further backed up by a letter to the Government from the Hobson County Council showing the hardship inflicted on the British subjects by aliens having easily obtained their naturalisation-papers and received licenses at 5s. to dig gum instead of having to pay £1. The Council recommends an alteration of the Act in this respect, and in that of not allowing aliens to dig till they have been resident for at least two years in the Dominion. There were many other points worthy of attention brought forward at the Conference intended to protect the British digger from unfair foreign competition. The military training of the Austrians enables them to organize their power in a co-operative way, which, while it should open the eyes of the colonists to their own laxity and feebleness in this respect, renders the strangers almost invincible when opposed to the scattered diggers of the British race. The camps of tents in which the Austrians live, neatly set up and with sanitary precautions; their arrangements for supplies, for working in ranks and gangs, clearing the gum out thoroughly as they move; the system for forwarding and selling the gum through agents of their own race; their legal advice from astute lawyers paid out of co-operative levies, &c., and with finances used for introducing fresh labour from Dalmatia: all these things, to those who have seen them, bring irresistible conviction that the wandering gumdigger who competes against them as a single person working just as he pleases buys his "freedom" at the cost of his living.

THE WOMEN'S BRANCHES.

In June, 1908, branch offices to facilitate the obtaining of employment by women were opened. Miss Bremner was appointed to Wellington, Miss Hale to Dunedin, Miss Morrison to Auckland, and Mrs. Mitchell to Christchurch. The work done has fully justified the institution of these branch offices, which give equality of opportunity (so far as free Government assistance goes) to women and to men. They have in the ten months since the offices were opened found employment for 2,255 women and girls, mostly in domestic service, but the lists include the names of seamstresses, typistes, governesses, laundresses, dressmakers, milliners, &c. The persons assisted included 517 married women with 270 dependents, and 1,738 single women. Of the whole number 1,039 were from the North Island, 954 from the South Island, 51 from Australia, 196 from Great Britain, and 15 from miscellaneous parts.

The domestic-servant trouble is one on which much could be written, and with very little use. The difficulty of obtaining servants springs from almost innumerable causes, and some of these causes are not to be deprecated. The main cause is, of course, that domestic service is not so attractive as some other occupations. The dislike to what has long been considered a "menial" position, together with the numerous avenues to employment in offices, shops, factories, tea-rooms, restaurants, hospitals, and other places where systematized work, regular hours, and recognised positions replace the irregularities and uncertainties of domestic life; all these tend to make it difficult to find sufficient servants to meet the demand. Every one must sympathize with the tired mother looking for some one to assist her with her little brood, but this is the kind of case wherein help is hardest to get, owing to more attractive influences.

THE WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT.

This Act is treated at length in a separate parliamentary report by Mr. Lomas, Chief Inspector of Factories, who is chief advisory officer to the Board.

It may here be noticed that statements have been made in Australia to the effect that our workers' dwellings are let at high rentals, and mostly to clerks, Civil servants, and others who are not included in the ranks of manual labourers. While it may be remarked that some clerks, on salaries as low or lower than those of skilled artisans, have as heavy a struggle against excessive rents as other workers have to maintain, the fact remains that the majority of people renting the Government cottages belong to the skilled trades, and to manual labour, as the following table shows:—

					Labourers.	Artisans.	Clerks, &c.
Auckland	..	..	..	..	2	15	7
Wellington	..	..	..	..	7	20	10
Christchurch	..	..	..	..	7	13	4
Dunedin	..	..	..	..	8	9	3
Totals	..	..	..	..	24	57	24

This does not include new dwellings at Sydenham not yet occupied.