

Commodities—continued.

	Wellington.	Auckland.	Christchurch.	Dunedin.
Potatoes	100	83.3	75	83.3
Boots, size 8, split kip, riveted, colonial, Hungarian-nailed	100	102.2	131.4	94.7
Boots, size 8, split kip, pegged, colonial make, nailed	100	87.6	120.8	87.5
Boots, size 8, best kip, pegged, colonial make, nailed	100	90.3	112.9	93.5
Apples, eating	100	58.3	66.6	66.6

Houses.

	Wellington.	Auckland.	Christchurch.	Dunedin.
Four rooms	100	73.8	82	78.7
Five rooms	100	62.1	69	70.1
Six rooms	100	64.3	71.3	79.2
Seven rooms	100	69.6	87	76.5

The figures are perplexing in some cases, and difficult to explain. That sugar should be cheaper in Auckland than in Wellington may perhaps be owing to the presence of the sugar-refinery in Auckland, although one would scarcely expect such a fact to affect seriously the retail price of so cheap an article. Nevertheless, when we find that sugar, although dearer in Wellington than in Auckland, and still dearer in Christchurch, is as cheap in Dunedin as in Auckland, the matter seems hard to understand. Why one should pay more for a medium-value boot in Wellington than in Auckland, again a still higher price in Christchurch, and then find it in Dunedin at the cheap Auckland rate is difficult of explanation. Dunedin buys its best kinds of candles cheap, its poor kinds of candles dear. Christchurch and Dunedin pay more for corned beef than Auckland or Wellington does. Christchurch buys kerosene dear compared with Wellington or Dunedin, and exceedingly dear if we note the Auckland price.

The table appears to prove that Auckland is much the cheapest of the four cities to live in, and Dunedin the next cheapest. If we turn to the schedules of house-rent at the end of the table, and bear in mind the other high rates of payment made by Wellington for her food-supplies and other commodities, we can understand that the rents paid in the "Empire City" are not only fatal to thrift among the town workers, but add to the lot of those who toil a burden to be endured almost without hope.

THE LABOUR JOURNAL.

This *Journal* continues to be widely circulated, and is quoted regularly in the Press as an authority upon the state of trade and employment. A very complete record is now given monthly as to the state of employment in the chief industries of New Zealand, and a summary is also published presenting in a concise and accessible form a generalised report as to trade-conditions in the chief and secondary towns. Secretaries of unions were also invited to send in reports for publication as to the state of trade from their point of view, and such as are received are also published regularly. The invitation has not been availed of to the extent contemplated, and, considering the agitation made by union secretaries for the privilege and that they sometimes complain of incorrectness in our reports, it is surprising that the privilege is not more generally exercised. From twenty-five to thirty of such reports are received monthly out of a total of over three hundred unions. It has been found that the reports received by the Department and those received from union secretaries do not always agree. However, I have to thank many of the secretaries that send reports for the trouble taken in this matter, both for their reliable reports and the promptness with which they are sent.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

The other publications issued by the Department are as follows:—

"Decisions and Interpretations under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act."—This was issued in parts during the year as the matter offered. Eight parts were issued in all, covering the period between 1st January and 31st December, 1908. Subsequently, a general edition was prepared of all the cases, and the parts were published as Vol. ix "Awards, Recommendations, Agreements, &c., made under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act." This volume continues to be of great service as a record of proceedings of the Court of Arbitration and Boards of Conciliation. The records of cases dealt with by Conciliation Commissioners will, of course, be included in future issues of this journal.