

each passing year, and the business transacted by the branches is measured by the number of applicants for work. With rare exceptions there has been work offering for all women callers, and new arrivals from overseas have the choice of many positions on the day of landing in the Dominion.

The following table shows the total number of workers assisted since the establishment of the branches in 1908:—

1908 (10 months)	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,542
1909-10	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,655
1910-11	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,244
1911-12	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,215
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	9,656

Of the total number assisted this year, 445 were married, 1,770 were single or widows; 375 came from Great Britain, and 51 from the Commonwealth, the balance hailing from either the North or South Island of New Zealand.

THE "SEDGWICK BOYS."

In continuation of my remarks last year on the work of these boys in their respective positions on the farms in New Zealand, I would like to give a short history of the scheme.

Fifty boys were selected by Mr. T. E. Sedgwick (a Londoner) for work on New Zealand farms; twenty-five of the boys came from Liverpool, and twenty-five from London, their ages ranging from sixteen to nineteen years. In the majority of cases the boys did not possess any experience in farm-work; some had been engaged in factories, others in shops and offices; most of them were not learning any trade whilst in England, and many of them lost time through unemployment. Generally they were the sons of very poor parents—some of them, in fact, were actually reported to be frequently short of food whilst in the Homeland.

Two hundred and fifty farmers in New Zealand had offered to co-operate with the Department in the experiment by giving work to the boys on arrival, and fifty of the most suitable situations were reported on by the officers of the Department. These employers offered certain wages and working-conditions covering a period of three years or less according to the ages of the boys concerned. I am pleased to say that, with comparatively few exceptions, the lads have stayed in the positions originally selected for them by the Department. After the fourteen months experience with these fifty boys (*i.e.*, to 31st March), I would classify them into the following three divisions: (a) Thirty-seven—those who have made good progress and have given the Department no trouble; (b) Six—those whose conduct has not been entirely satisfactory, but who we expect will turn out all right eventually; and (c) Seven—those whose behaviour has been so unsatisfactory that it is unlikely they will prove successful. In the last section five of the boys made no real effort to do farm-work, while the remaining two absconded, and have not since been traced.

Considering the environments from which the boys came, the strangeness of their new surroundings, and that they had had no experience in farm-work or rural life, I think that the conclusion one must come to is that the scheme has on the whole worked satisfactorily. (In this comment I am, of course, not taking into account the question of how the local supply of labour may be affected by the immigration of these boys.) Even had fifty city colonial boys been dealt with in a similar way, it is doubtful whether a larger percentage would have been loyal to their employers and to the Department.

In some cases the Department selected two and even three boys for positions on one farm. With one exception, this selection has not turned out satisfactorily, owing to the boys becoming disaffected and plotting amongst themselves. Transfers had therefore to be made. Since then, however, the boys placed on different farms have—individually—made better progress and have been more contented. A rather remarkable feature in connection with the boys who have been unfavourably reported on is that they are all over the maximum age fixed by the Department for selection by Mr. Sedgwick—*viz.*, eighteen years.

The older boys were not only difficult to train, but were not so amenable to discipline as their younger companions. It would have been better had the condition laid down by the Department been adhered to. In the few cases where difficulty has been experienced in controlling the boys, the Department has been successful chiefly by sending its nearest agent to visit them. By this means several misunderstandings and grievances have been satisfactorily righted; in some cases a transfer to a new district has been effective, whilst in the more serious cases I have had to