

bring the boys to Wellington and personally interview them as to their conduct. In only one case have extreme measures been taken. After three trials on different farms, I arranged for one boy to work his passage back to England rather than let him remain in New Zealand to loaf around in search of casual work.

During their first year (ending 24th January, 1912), the boys earned a total sum of £1,112 7s., an average of 10s. 4d. a week per head. In addition, in 70 per cent. of the cases the employers found the boys in all necessary wearing-apparel. The whole of the transit expenses of the boys incurred by the Department from Wellington to their destinations will be refunded, so that the Department will be at no monetary loss.

In addition to conducting correspondence with the boys and the employers concerned, the Department has in 20 per cent. of the cases bought the necessary clothing, boots, &c., for the boys. These purchases have been made in the cheapest and best market—generally from local wholesale warehouses, and without exception, the purchases have been satisfactory to the lads.

The correspondence has been very heavy, as each boy writes monthly to the Department, and in many cases more frequently if occasion requires it. Each letter is answered, and an encouraging word is sent to those who are endeavouring to succeed with their work.

Beyond a few minor accidents and complaints, the boys have suffered no illnesses in New Zealand, whilst most of them have gained in weight by from one to two and a half stone.

Viewed generally it has been a valuable experiment, and if full and legal control could be gained over the boys it would tend to perfecting the scheme. Right at the root of the matter, however, lies the necessity for greater care to be taken in the selection of the boys. Character should form the first requirement, then good health and evidence of physical well-being. In no case should town boys who are over the age of seventeen years be selected for farm-work in New Zealand.

I have to thank the farmers and most of the boys concerned for their hearty co-operation in the experiment. The agents of the Department at Timaru, Palmerston North, and Invercargill have taken a specially sympathetic interest in the welfare of the boys in their districts, and have thus assisted largely in the success of the work.

DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARY.

Valuable additions have been made to the library, publications respecting social, economic, and industrial matters being regularly received from all portions of the globe. The blue-books and literature received have been very valuable, more especially those published by the British, United States, and Canadian Labour Departments. Much interesting and useful material relative to the cost of living has also come to hand, dealing mainly with inquiries instituted in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Belgium, United States of America, and the Commonwealth of Australia. These works do not touch on the causes leading to the alleged increase in the cost of living, but, almost without exception, comprise statistics collected showing how the workers spend their earnings on main items of expenditure—viz., rent, food, clothing, fuel, and light, &c., in much the same manner as is shown in the inquiry instituted in New Zealand and already mentioned.

Valuable publications entitled “Women and Child Labour in the United States of America” have been added. Each volume deals with a separate trade or phase of child or woman labour.

Steps are being taken to collect the whole of the Australian publications on industrial legislation for inclusion in the Department's library. The determinations of the Wages Boards of Victoria and Tasmania continue to be regularly received, but the library seems to lack a complete set of the statutes passed by the Australian States and the Commonwealth.

Although the library has not been availed of to any great extent by the general public, it was of value to many visitors to New Zealand who found it a great convenience for reference purposes. To the officers of the Department it has proved invaluable in many matters affecting its work.

GENERAL.

The correspondence of the Department continues to increase rapidly. In the Head Office there were 16,900 separate letters despatched (nearly 60 per day), and 16,090 received; 1,476 telegrams were sent out, and 1,406 received. There were also the usual circulars to occupiers of factories and shops in connection with their annual returns; the notices (amounting to many thousands) sent out with copies of Arbitration Court awards to each employer concerned; and circulars (numbering about 10,000) on other matters. The bringing into operation of the Workers' Dwellings Act of 1910 has involved a large increase in correspondence.