

It will be seen from the above table that, as was the case last year, and also in 1910, the number of employers is steadily increasing, while the number of workers is decreasing. In 1910 the number of applications from employers was 2,567; in 1911 the number was 2,970; and for 1912 we have 3,144. Of course, in 1910 the branch had not been very long established, and was not as well known as it is now; still I believe the number is increasing owing to the increase of population and increase in demand for workers. The number of workers suited for the last twelve months is 548. In 1910 our table showed 961, and in 1911 the number was 784. The numbers 548 and 784 show the individual number of workers suited in 1911 and 1912, but many of these girls have been suited more than once in the year, whereas in 1910 we took credit for each engagement. The fall in numbers, as I pointed out last year, is to be accounted for by the fact that girls marry, or go into other situations, and there are not enough coming forward to take their places. I calculate that a woman worker takes employment for only four or five years, when, as a rule, she marries, and consequently is off the market as a worker. The summary will show the pressing need there is for all classes of women workers, and no woman need be idle who really wants work.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

J. MITCHELL, Officer in Charge.

DUNEDIN.

SIR,—

Department of Labour (Women's Branch), Dunedin, 16th April, 1912.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on this branch of the Department for the year ended 31st March, 1912.

During the period under review 1,456 applications have been registered—viz., 1,121 from employers and 335 from workers, of whom 283 were placed in employment. In addition to this, 30 persons who had been previously assisted were found employment.

Compared with last year, I regret to have to record a decrease in the number assisted; this is not so surprising when it is taken into account that the difficulty in securing domestic workers grows more acute from day to day. Neither have we the advantage of immigrant boats calling at this port with domestic workers aboard.

One of the difficulties encountered in placing workers is the aversion most of them have to going where there are young children, and it is the mothers with young children who are most in need of help, particularly in the country districts, where temporary assistance is unobtainable. Others, again, object to undertake cooking and washing.

Some of the applicants applying for work were not so competent and active as one could wish, and the need for capable, clean, conscientious workers is very pressing indeed. Something may be said on the other side, but suffice it to say that if employers would treat their maids with a little more courtesy and extend to them their right to be called "Miss" like the shop-assistant or lady clerk, a better feeling would prevail, and the dignity of the domestic worker would receive an uplift. This is a vexed question amongst this particular class of worker, especially with the elder ones, who retaliate by advising their sisters and friends not to follow the occupation of a domestic worker. In proportion as the conditions of employment have changed and improved in other occupations of women workers, so must those of the domestic worker if they are to attract and encourage young women to engage in the work. In addition to work in domestic service, there is employment offering for a large number of women workers in outside callings, including clothing, boot, and bookbinding factories. The following is a classified summary of the applications received and the vacancies filled:—

Occupations.	Applications from Employers.	Applications from Workers.	Workers placed.
Generals	647	127	125
Housemaids	80	34	23
Cooks	47	21	16
Nursegirls	9	1	1
Charwomen	61	36	36
Housekeepers	35	49	24
Kitchenmaids	25	14	11
Shop-assistants	1	1	1
Lady-helps	9	7	1
Pantrymaids	4	3	2
Farm hand	1	1	1
Dressmakers	3	2	2
Coatmakers	9
Scullerymaids	5	3	3
Shirt-machinists	9	2	2
Wardmaids	5
Biscuit-packer	1	1	1
Parlourmaid	19
Laundresses	16	4	4
Corker	1	1	1
Waitresses	20	17	4
Nurses	27	7	5
Girls to assist	87	24	20
Total	1,121	355	283

I have, &c.,

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

M. S. HALE, Officer in Charge.