

SESSION II.  
1918.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

(REPORT OF THE).

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*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency*

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## REPORT.

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The SECRETARY, Department of Labour, to the Right Hon. the MINISTER OF LABOUR.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 16th July, 1918.

I have the honour to present herewith the twenty-seventh annual report of this Department, for the information of His Excellency the Governor-General, and to be laid before Parliament in compliance with the Labour Department and Labour Day Act, 1908, and the Factories Act, 1908. The report covers the financial year 1st April, 1917, to 31st March, 1918, and is again considerably reduced in size, comprising twenty-three pages, as against 117 in the year before the war.

I have, &c.,

F. W. ROWLEY,

The Right Hon. the Minister of Labour.

Secretary of Labour.

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### CONDITIONS OF TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT.

Little difficulty has been experienced during the year in dealing with unemployment. Reports throughout the Dominion indicate that the number of men requiring employment has been considerably less than in previous years, and in almost all cases applications have been successfully dealt with. Despite anticipations to the contrary, there were more men available during harvest-time than were inquired for by employers—in fact, very few applications were made for such men; apparently the farmers relied upon such labour as offered locally, together with their own efforts and those of neighbouring farmers.

On the 31st March, 1914, the total male population aged from fifteen upwards was about 397,000. Approximately the total number of men withdrawn from industries for military service, &c., to date (abroad and in New Zealand) is 100,000—that is, one in every 3·97 (or approximately 1 in 4). The vacancies caused by the withdrawals from industries have been filled in various ways, viz.: (1) The employment of women and girls in occupations hitherto filled by male workers, especially in offices, &c.; (2) the absorption of workers from unessential industries to essential work, and the postponement of various kinds of non-urgent work; (3) the employment of persons who had retired from active work; (4) the employment of boys and girls on leaving school to a greater extent than usual; (5) longer hours of work, and the assistance rendered by one farmer to another.

In order to ensure proper conditions for the female workers employed in offices, an inspection of the commercial offices in all the more important towns of the Dominion was undertaken during last winter, and although in the majority of cases it was found that the convenience of the assistants was receiving due consideration, in other instances various improvements to premises were requisitioned, which on being completed brought the buildings affected into line with the requirements of the law.

The Department has continued during the year to co-operate with the Discharged Soldiers' Information Department in securing suitable employment for returned soldiers.

The empowering of Inspectors of Factories to issue permits to approved discharged men, incapacitated from resuming their former occupations, to work under various awards at a reduced