Empire Settlement and Single British Women as New Zealand Domestic Servants during the 1920s*

DURING THE 1920s, in co-operation with the British government, the New Zealand government ran a scheme which offered free passages to British women aged 18 to 40, who were ‘bona fide’ domestics with two years of preliminary employment or had worked in their own homes. The category of ‘domestic’ included general servant, cook, housemaid, parlourmaid, waitress, laundress and nursemaid. At the time, an estimated 90% of the homes in New Zealand employing domestic labour had only one servant per household. The overwhelming demand was thus for general servants, although, had more servants been available, a number of households would probably have preferred two. After passing the regular medical examination, each woman signed a document to say that she would undertake domestic service for 12 months, not marry during this time, and stay in New Zealand for at least five years. Along with the free third-class passage, a £2 gratuity was provided as an extra incentive.

The recorded 4504 British women who chose to migrate to New Zealand (see Table 1) represented only approximately 5% of the estimated 100,000 women who left Britain during the inter-war years as assisted domestics. By far the greatest number (approximately 80%) chose Canada, while another 5% made the journey to Australia.

The history of these women has received attention at the imperial level, and particularly for Canada, at the national level. In recovering the history of the women who came to New Zealand, this essay draws upon the imperial context. It argues that the migration of these women needs to be understood in relation to the designs of empire settlement, and the discourse on ‘surplus’ women. Such discussion is the focus of the first part of the essay. Written with the legacy of the 1952 Hope Gibbons fire, in which virtually all of the New Zealand Department of Immigration’s inter-war records were destroyed, the middle section of the paper moves to consider post-war conditions in New Zealand, and the ‘servant shortage’. Although, unfortunately, it is too late for oral histories, the final section of the paper investigates the agency of the women themselves, and their experiences as New Zealand immigrants.

At the end of World War I, newspapers in Britain wrote of the ‘enormous excess of women’, due to the decimation of men in the country’s worst bloodletting in history. From the Colonial Office, Leo Amery cited figures that women exceeded men in Britain by more than a million. According to historian Dane Kennedy, Amery considered the deemed ‘surplus’ women ‘wasted resources’, who were ‘fated to husbandless, childless, unsatisfied lives, and liable to distress and discontent as demobilized soldiers replaced them in the
Well before the end of World War I, British officials were busy considering what to do with the ‘surplus’ of women in the United Kingdom. With a reverse ‘surplus’ of men over women in the dominions, especially in the country districts, in 1917 the Dominions Royal Commission on Population called for ‘adjustment’. It was considered that the men who were returning deserved decent jobs, not to find those jobs taken up by women with new-found confidence from their time in the auxiliary services. Hence, the ‘surplus’ women would be sent to the British dominions, solving colonial domestic labour problems and, at the same time, contributing to population growth and market development, strengthening the British empire overall with more people and more markets. Stephen Constantine has argued that female migration would confirm women’s traditional place ‘and the satisfaction of masculine needs; it would preserve British culture and political predominance in the dominions by the breeding of new generations from fresh British stock, and it would sustain economic production and prosperity through the stimulus of more marriage, higher birth rates, population growth, and larger markets’.

The idea of ‘surplus’ women was, of course, not new in the twentieth century. In Britain, the myth of redundant women possessed popular credence by 1851, and it gathered momentum with the long period of migration in the century before World War I, when more men than women emigrated from Britain. Female migration during this period has received considerable attention from historians. Accompanying the idea of ‘surplus’ women was an integral connection between labour and migration. For New Zealand, Charlotte Macdonald’s history of single women as immigrant settlers in the nineteenth century connected the presence of a ‘sex-imbalance’ in Britain with a shortage of female domestic servants in New Zealand.

In an age of imperialism, women were considered ‘surplus’ because it was considered wasteful and unnatural to have more women than men per capita. Indeed, at a time when people were referred to as ‘stock’ it was considered...

Table 1: Domesticos who arrived in New Zealand 1920–1932

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nominated</th>
<th>Assisted</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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contrary to imperial objectives to have a ‘surplus’ of either sex. In the contemporary discourse of the European colonization of New Zealand the concern about an excess of men over women was often asserted; the notion of reaching a balance of the sexes was an underlying heterosexual principle in society. The assumptions about a patriarchal society, the family unit, of colonial helpmeets and a ‘man’s country’, are all well documented by historians of New Zealand, if often implicitly. Critiquing the construction of ‘imbalance’, Macdonald has recently suggested that ‘the conclusion, then, is not to deny the existence of the population imbalance but to give it greater specificity, and to question the degree to which it can be used as an unproblematic dynamic of gender’. Ideologically, the British colonies were seen as a frontier man’s zone, a harsh place of taming indigenous peoples, of clearing land, and generally of building new societies that looked to the ‘old country’ for their models of social order. This meant setting up domestic society, with women in the ‘private’ sphere of the home and family, and men in the ‘public’ sphere of trade, commerce and the land.

Those examining the gendered dynamics of colonialism, such as Anne McClintock, claim that women and their domestic experience are an integral part of colonialism, and that the cult of domesticity, that is, the Eurocentric naturalization of women as nurturers, caregivers, wives and mothers in deemed ‘private’ and inferior spaces was ‘a crucial, if concealed’ and ‘indispensable element in both the industrial market and the imperial enterprise’. The centrality of domesticity to colonialism was clearly the case with the women considered ‘surplus’ during the 1920s. Domesticity was out in the open as the paid
occupation for which the dominions most required young women. This pragmatic demand for labour combined with domesticity doubling as women’s ‘true’ unpaid vocation of the time. Underpinning notions of domesticity was the recognition that women were essential in human reproduction; a central, if silent factor in colonial discourses of imperial growth and expansion. A significant feature of the post-war years was the extent of state involvement in attempting to carry out state objectives.

As part of Britain’s grandiose post-war emigration plans, single women became a target group in the 1922 Empire Settlement Act. The Act authorized assisted passages and land settlement for British people to emigrate to current or former British territories, especially Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and, to a lesser extent, South Africa. The Act was initially for 15 years, with £3 million allocated each year. In the plans for empire settlement there was much negotiation between Britain and the receiving countries. The preference for the types of migrants to be supported was worked out after consultation with the dominions at the 1921 Imperial Conference in London. In Britain, and cautiously in New Zealand, it was hoped that a great new wave of migration was about to begin. New Zealand, and the other former British colonies, agreed to meet half of the cost incurred with Britain, and at the same time to take on more official responsibility in the selection and settlement of immigrants. The structure of the Empire Settlement Act reflected the belief in the heterosexual family as a fundamental organizing unit of society, with a pragmatic rural emphasis. Under the Act, the more desirable the migrant, the greater was the assistance offered. Single agricultural labourers, married couples, juveniles aged 14–17 and domestics, were the major target groups. Nearly two million emigrants were recorded from 1920 to 1929. By 1936, over 405,000 people had been assisted to migrate under the Empire Settlement Act. Of these, 46% went to Canada (186,524), 43% to Australia (172,735), 11% to New Zealand (44,745) and a mere 1226 to South Africa. The make-up by age and sex was approximately one-third males over 12, one-third females over 12 and one-third young children: a favourable reflection of the objective of encouraging families, women and children.

Overall, historians have judged the Empire Settlement Act a failure. Explanations often echo the sentiments of the architects of empire settlement, considering the Act unsuccessful due to the relatively low number of migrants in comparison to the pre-World War I years, and with far fewer people migrating than the planners had envisioned. Any remaining hopes were rapidly dashed by the Depression. In such analysis, the agency of those who chose to migrate has taken a background position. Another important factor in explaining the Act’s ‘failure’ was the strong degree of autonomy in the dominions. Britain’s narrative of empire unity through increased trade and production was accompanied by increasing uncertainty about the strength and value of empire. Any plans for British ‘dumping’ of ‘surplus’ people were carefully and pragmatically vetted by the dominions. Well aware of the post-war push factors in an economically depressed Britain and although willing to operate within the empire where beneficial, the dominions put their own interests first. There was a fear among trade unionists and war veterans of an attempt to flood the labour market.
At the time, so-called ‘British stock’ was considered the unquestioned ‘race’ with which to populate the dominions. As well as contributing to ridding Britain of its ‘surplus’, empire settlement had the added benefit of potential economic, strategic and cultural development of the dominions, which would ultimately lead to a vaster British empire, aided by a more ‘even’ distribution of British people. A social imperialist doctrine of the time saw the open resources in the dominions as an opportunity for economic development and a means of renewal for a ‘British race’ polluted by industrial urbanization. It was believed that there were vast expanses of land, especially in Canada and Australia, waiting to be populated with fresh ‘British stock’. Not only could the dominions absorb ‘surplus’ British people, but they needed to do so if they were to develop their political, economic and social life to the best advantage, and to play an effective part in the matter of defence.

In the quest to make sure that British people migrated to British territories, and especially the dominions, all places were assigned positive environmental qualities. In Canada, the cold northern climate was believed to promote self-reliance, initiative, individualism and strength, evident in the mythology of a hardy northern race created by a stern and demanding climate. Meanwhile, the heat of South Africa led it to be considered the ‘lungs of Empire’, beneficial for any number of ailments. Australia was the land of the redeeming and strengthening sun. New Zealand, it was believed, with a comparable climate to Britain, would make for easy adaptation. Indeed, a 1926 New Zealand publication New Zealand: The Better Britain emphasized ‘a new Britain under the Southern Cross: a land British in tradition, British in ideals, and closely reproducing the features of the land from which they came. The immigrant, as we know from experience, readily adapts himself to the conditions of life in New Zealand. In no country of the Empire is this process of adaptation to new surroundings so free from difficulty’. According to the publication, New Zealand was a ‘progressive, prosperous land’ that ‘holds out the promise of reasonable comfort and prosperity to all classes of immigrant — the man on the land, the artisan, workers of both sexes in the factory, and women in domestic service’.

From such a context, the New Zealand domestic servants’ scheme came together in the combination of the discourses of ‘surplus’ women with that of an alarmist ‘servant shortage’. In common with the discourse of ‘surplus’ women, ‘servant shortage’ was prevalent from the onset of colonization. The shortage of domestic servants was perceived to be acute and immigration was considered a way of alleviating the situation. The Department of Immigration’s 1919 report stated that ‘At the present time there is a great demand for domestic servants, and an endeavour is being made to arrange for a steady flow of this class of immigrant, as soon as the necessary accommodation is available’. Meanwhile, looking to a ‘surplus’ of single British women, the Dominion Office in Britain agreed that ‘the absence of domestic assistance in the homes of New Zealand is a matter of national importance’.

Immediately after the First World War, the fear of ‘servant shortage’ reached alarmist proportions. In 1919 the Member of Parliament for Auckland East, A.M. Myers, asked in parliamentary question time ‘if in view of the great shortage of domestic servants he [the Minister] would instruct the High Commissioner to arrange for regular batches of domestic servants by each boat arriving from Britain’. This fear of ‘servant shortage’ was further heightened by the need for an alternative to the women who had worked in the factories and elsewhere during the war. The domestic servants’ scheme was thus an attempt to address this perceived shortage.
leaving England for New Zealand?' So acute was the shortage perceived to be that ‘a number of domestic servants should be imported at each possible moment’. Prime Minister Massey replied that ‘the earliest possible moment would be when all the soldiers had returned’.33

Myers was not alone in his fears. The member for Gisborne, W.D. Lysnar, suggested chartering special boats to get more British immigrants to relieve the ‘serious shortage of labour in New Zealand particularly in regard to domestic service, the shortage of which is causing serious inconvenience and in some cases the actual loss of life through want of proper assistance in carrying on domestic duties’.34 A concerned New Zealand Herald in 1920 declared that ‘Home life in New Zealand was suffering because of the shortage of domestic help’. Evoking the discourse of ‘surplus’ women it suggested a potential solution: ‘Yet the excess of women between the ages of fifteen and forty five in the United Kingdom, numbered 566,000 in 1911, now stands at 1,266,999’.35

It was, however, mostly men who were the immediate post-war targets for repatriation and immigration. The immediate priority of the New Zealand government was to repatriate soldiers, reported to be taking up all the shipping available through 1919.36 Massey promised that once these men were back in New Zealand the government would proceed to ‘bring the country whatever immigrants were necessary’.37 Men continued to be the focus, and up to the end of 1922 the Returned Servicemen Scheme saw 39,419 returned servicemen, with their families (86,027 people), leaving Britain for new opportunities in the dominions. Approximately 43.7% (37,576) went to Australia, 31.3% (26,905) to Canada, 15.5% (13,349) to New Zealand, and 7% (6064) to South Africa.38 Attention then turned towards the newly minted Empire Settlement Act, and the priority it gave to single women as domestic servants. The Act greatly bolstered the New Zealand government’s scheme through the Department of Immigration, which had been assisting a small number of British women as domestic servants since 1920.

While the discourses of ‘surplus’ women and ‘servant shortage’ displayed much continuity with the nineteenth century, there were a number of ways in which the post-war years were a new era for women. For many women, there were new horizons and attitudes brought about by a combination of the results of a first wave of feminism, which saw the entry of women into higher education and occupations that were previously male, and new work opportunities for women brought about by technological and industrial change.39 In inter-war New Zealand, domestic service as an occupation belonged to an earlier era of servitude. Women were seeking higher wages and better working conditions and they were moving into higher paid work in commerce and factories and the ‘middle-class’ occupations, teaching and nursing. During the inter-war years factories, offices and department stores gradually took over from domestic service as the primary employers of women.40

While the idea of women migrating as domestics turned out to be old-fashioned, the implementation of the scheme itself displayed some new initiatives of the 1920s. Up to World War I, it was voluntary women who had taken the primary responsibility in the assistance of women migrants.41 Significantly, in the 1920s, for the first time in British history ‘the importance of women to any comprehensive strengthening of the empire was fully accepted by the
government'. At the same time, the endurance of the belief that women were best able to care for migrant women saw women’s voluntary organizations continuing with their maternal work. While the British and dominion governments were more actively involved, private agencies were still important, and women migrants were ultimately considered best supervised by other women. At the same time, more women were starting to enter paid positions within government, and in the move away from voluntarism toward professionalism some women gained key bureaucratic positions.

An example of increasing state involvement in activities that were still gendered female and ‘private’ was that in Britain women migrants were organized and protected by the Society for the Settlement of British Women (SOSBW). The SOSBW was a half-voluntary, half-state organization whose goal was to increase the number of English women in the British empire. It was founded in 1919 by an amalgamation of previously influential women’s voluntary emigration societies: the South Africa Colonization Society, the Colonial Intelligence League and the British Women’s Emigration Association. In 1920 the SOSBW was recognized as the Women’s Branch of the Overseas Settlement Department of the Colonial Office, yet with its staff remaining as voluntary workers. Its rhetoric echoed the sentiments of the Colonial Office, with the SOSBW’s second annual report asserting that ‘At the present time the question of the better distribution of British population is of paramount importance. While the Mother Country is over-populated and with a large majority of women, the dominions have vast empty spaces and more men than women’. In receiving migrants, the dominions employed a similar pattern of bureaucracy to Britain, with government immigration departments setting up special women’s branches, while the bulk of the work continued to be done by women’s voluntary organizations, such as the Girls’ Friendly Society, the YWCA, the Victoria League, and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE). The Salvation Army and the Overseas League were also of great importance. The women involved, society women, were likely to be the ones who would also benefit personally from domestic labour.

At the end of World War I, delegations of the British Government Oversea Committee were sent to New Zealand, Canada and Australia to inquire into post-war conditions for the migration of ‘surplus’ women. In 1919 a delegation of Misses F.M. Girdler and G. Watkin from the SOSBW toured New Zealand to gain an idea of the possibilities for single British women. The rationale for their intentions was that ‘at the conclusion of the War 181,000 women were working as members of the Women’s Auxiliary Services. On demobilization many will return to their homes and many to their former occupations, but there is a certain proportion who have expressed a desire to come out to one or other of the Oversea dominions, some of whom have specifically asked to be sent out to country districts’. In a memo that they sent to the YWCA in New Zealand it was stated ‘that a new era in immigration is about to open’. Optimistic about opportunities in New Zealand, they reported many openings for industrial and domestic workers, especially for domestic on farms. They also saw opportunities for women to work on the land at share-milking, bee-keeping, orchardry and poultry keeping. Their detailed report encompassed the high expectations of post-war British migration.
Continued and improved protection of single women migrants was considered of integral importance in the post-war plans. Girdler and Watkin suggested ‘a system which will ensure protection during the journey, reception upon arrival, assistance in obtaining employment and the establishment of some form of welfare work which will follow them up and form a link with the central organization’. The delegation was concerned with the arrangements for the reception, temporary housing and distribution of the new arrivals. There were grand plans for establishing small residential hostels as depots for women arriving from overseas, which would also provide permanent homes for a certain number of daily workers. Accompanying the imperial rhetoric of populating vast rural colonial expanses, there was ample recognition that rural positions needed to be made attractive. According to the delegates, the existence of hostels and clubs in the small towns would ‘offer the strongest inducement for young women to go into country homes, knowing that they have in their nearest town a Club and Hostel where a personal interest will be taken in their welfare, and where some social life will be available’.

The Department of Immigration reported upon Watkin and Girdler’s tour, but in 1920 the Minister of Immigration stated that ‘I am of the opinion that there is not a great deal of scope to place women settlers, other than domestic servants, in this Dominion’. The infrastructure suggested in the report did not eventuate. The plans for networks of hostels to welcome and care for an influx of single British women remained unrealized hopes.

While the New Zealand government was pragmatic about the ‘servant shortage’ and required women migrants to be domestics, the middle-class women’s organizations shared with the SOSBW a faith in a broader imperial agenda. Women’s organizations saw empire settlement as an opportunity for the migration of middle-class British women. Women who for class reasons would never have considered domestic service in Britain were co-opted for dominion domestic work with the promise that it was an avenue toward a better life. For example, in the mid-1920s parties of educated British girls who would do domestic work in another country, but not their own, went to Australia to work as domestics. The venture was assisted by the Victoria League, a voluntary empire-wide women’s organization that, in particular, encouraged educated women from Britain to settle in Australia. The scheme entailed an assisted passage for women aged 18–35 years, and a year of domestic employment at a fixed minimum salary in Victoria, while keeping in touch with the Victoria League. In contrast to other domestic labourers, the League believed that an ‘educated woman in the country districts will often find that she shares the work with the members of the household, and also takes part in their social life’.

Middle-class women’s organizations were ardent supporters of empire settlement, recognizing imperial concerns as well as national priorities. The Victoria League and other middle-class women’s organizations pinned their hopes on migration schemes as ways to ‘strengthen the ties which bind the women of the Empire together’. In rural settings, it was hoped that the migrants would make social connections and marry in the community. An Australian booklet published in the early 1920s, entitled *Australia Invites the Domestic Girl*, stated that ‘the healthy, wholesome British domestic girl, is the girl who in some capacity can help in the home as a first step towards entering in to a home
of her own. For Australia, above everything, is a land of home-making, and for
the rapid multiplication of homes she needs more and more of the right type of
girl, and there are not enough of the native-born to go round.\footnote{38} In the healthy
Australian environment, a thriving British woman would first gain an
apprenticeship in a respectable Australian home, before establishing her own,
fulfilling her natural role as wife and mother, and ultimately contributing to the
national and imperial good.

Despite the attention that their work received from the SOSBW, the migration
of middle-class women was very small. No tax on resources, it was able to
continue during the late 1920s, when the domestics’ scheme was waning. The
SOSBW reported the Victoria League as looking after settlers ‘with undiminished
goodwill and kindness’.\footnote{59} In 1929, ten ‘educated girls’ were placed by the League
in Christchurch as ‘home helps’, an increase from the three who were selected
and sent in 1928.\footnote{60}

As suggested in Girdler and Watkin’s report, with increased state involvement
came more attention to protection. ‘British stock’, it was believed, must be
respectable, with women’s virtue protected. In this way women’s organizations
stepped up their maternal role as surrogate mothers, guiding ‘daughters’ to
another part of the family in the empire’s big happy home, with character
protected and the girls arriving intact. Proper protection during the voyage was
a major concern of the SOSBW.\footnote{61} At the danger zone of the port, hostels in
Britain provided lodgings to protect women from unsavoury characters before
departure. Matrons called conductresses acted as chaperones on Canada-bound
ships.\footnote{62} The 1921 report of the SOSBW claimed a ‘complete system of protection
of all unaccompanied women in Canada’.\footnote{63} The longer journeys to New Zealand,
Australia and South Africa posed more problems. In 1924 a conference urged
that conductresses should be appointed for single girls, in addition to the ship’s
matron. From 1926 there were permanent conductresses and sewing materials
(as in mid-Victorian days) so that needlework classes could be held on board,
fostering domestic virtues.\footnote{64} In 1926 the SOSBW made the claim that ‘a matron
appointed by the New Zealand government travels in each steamer in charge of
domestic servants proceeding under the free passage scheme’.\footnote{65}

In comparison to the other receiving countries, the New Zealand reception
and placement of domestics had a small-scale and relatively orderly history.
The machinery of the placing of domestic servants in New Zealand was well-
organized, perhaps because New Zealand had the clear advantage of having a
smaller geography than Canada or Australia and a small number of arrivals.
Table 2 shows the arrival and destinations of the women domestics. Continuing
with the practices of the nineteenth century, there were two types of migrants:
nominated and assisted. Nominated migrants were those sponsored in Britain
by relatives or future employers in New Zealand. Assisted migrants were those
who applied directly through the New Zealand High Commission in London.
In the case of domestic servants, the distinction between nominated and assisted
migrants was in name only. Because of the demand for domestic labour,
conditions for both categories of migrants were the same, and aside from some
groups of children, women domestics were the only nominated group to qualify
for a free passage. The New Zealand nominator might be both family and
employer, with women migrating to work for their relations.
Table 2: Regional destinations of domestics after they disembarked in Auckland and Wellington

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Auckland</th>
<th>Canterbury</th>
<th>Hawke's Bay</th>
<th>Marlborough</th>
<th>Nelson</th>
<th>Otago</th>
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In 1920 the YWCA approached the New Zealand government offering its services to look after all arriving assisted single British women, and setting out its conditions. The YWCA had a strong record of helping women migrants in the years before World War I, when it had received £150 per annum for its work of meeting boats and providing temporary accommodation. The result of the YWCA's correspondence was that in 1920 the YWCA Trust Board entered into a contract with the government, the agreement gaining Cabinet approval on 15 November 1920. The YWCA was to be available at the four ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Port Chalmers for the reception of women immigrants. Female officers would meet all boats and trains, when and where requested by the Department of Immigration, and conduct the domestics to hostels. Temporary accommodation would be provided in the hostels, the first 24 hours of board and lodging free. A specified number of guaranteed beds in hostels in Auckland (25), Wellington (30), Christchurch (10) and Dunedin (10) would be set aside. Further, the YWCA would generally offer advice and assistance to the new arrivals. Full free membership in the YWCA for three months would be offered, and the YWCA would attempt to keep in touch with the girls.6 For its work as agent, the YWCA was to receive £500 per annum, half of what it initially asked for.67

Along with other women's organizations and the SOSBW, complicit with the objectives of empire settlement, the YWCA considered its work of wider significance than placing domestic labour. In requesting the subsidy, the New Zealand YWCA President evoked nation-building, and the aspirations of empire settlement:

Dear Sir,
You will of course be aware that the War has brought 'girls' into much greater prominence and shown how much more important they are than has hitherto been conceded, whether they are looked upon as workers only, or as the prospective mothers of a generation which will be called upon to bear a heavy burden.68

Voluntary women could be useful in contributing to creating good citizens through their maternal capacities. It was believed that, if the British women were well cared for, they would become good national and imperial citizens. Hence migrants were extended 'the human touch' at the YWCA, with the claim that each received 'a warm and courteous reception and each girl is made to feel she is an individual come to a branch of her Mother Country and in whose mind the idea is implanted that she is part of a British working community helping to build up a part of the British Empire and in this way is her self respect appealed to'.69

Such rhetorics of race, empire and nation were ever-present in the YWCA's correspondence with the New Zealand government. In 1926 the YWCA secretary wrote to the Under-Secretary for Immigration concerning a £250 instalment of the subsidy, thanking the government for the remittance and 'trust(ing) that our Association in its turn is doing its share to help make these girls into good New Zealanders'.70 Practically, this help took the form of each woman receiving upon arrival 'a posy of flowers and these flowers are so cherished that, in some cases, they have been sent back to the beloved Home Country to their families as a token that they have found friends here and others have put them between
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The work with immigrants was part of the YWCA’s more general inter-war concern with citizenship. Its Girl Citizen movement paralleled other youth movements of the time, such as the Girl Guides, who were also concerned with moral and physical fitness. The YWCA thought that they could mould the migrants into appropriate New Zealand citizens, believing that ‘it is the first months of life in New Zealand that set a girl’s standard of living’.

Generally, as ‘British stock’, the domestics were accorded high status, and their qualities for becoming good New Zealand citizens were emphasized. Referring to a continuation of colonial New Zealand’s pioneering past, the Auckland Star reported of the first arrivals in September 1920 that this ‘advance guard’ were ‘all keen and intelligent women. One of them is a housekeeper with references extending over five or six years, and a widow with a little girl to support. It is to make a place for her and to get the little girl out that she has come so far and had the courage to land in a strange country with only a pound behind her. It is by this kind of woman that the Dominion has been built, the English women of unsurpassed courage in the face of difficulties.‘ Later, in 1927, the YWCA report for Auckland recorded, ‘A fine type, nearly all young, from 17-25 years of age and very eager to take advantage of the opportunities offered them in this country. They are attractive in appearance generally, and underneath their surface lightness almost all are ready to absorb all the new impressions in this country’.

Given the propaganda by the British and New Zealand governments, bolstered by women’s organizations, why was it that only 4504 women migrated to New Zealand? The low numbers need to be viewed in the already mentioned context of domestic service no longer being a popular occupation and of the shortage of servants in Britain. Migration was not necessary in order to find work as a domestic. In terms of the scheme in general, Janice Gothard has argued that Canada’s pre-eminence was due to its relative proximity to the United Kingdom and to the importance of chain migration. Marilyn Barber has suggested that the perceived attraction of higher wages and better opportunities in Canada was a motive, and that ‘the promise of higher pay for lighter work, an attractive climate and a more democratic society were the ultimate draw’. Publicity could also be an influencing factor. Interviews by Paula Hamilton with women who chose Australia reinforce ‘the role played by government publicity in the decision to migrate’.

It was not a new feature for New Zealand to receive lower numbers of British migrants than elsewhere in the empire. Not only was the New Zealand population smaller, but the distance was the greatest. This led to much caution by the New Zealand government, which enforced strict conditions on migrants. The 1921 Immigration report stated that, ‘Because of the fact that New Zealand is situated at such a great distance from our base whence our supply of immigrants is drawn, it is essential that none but the best quality should be despatched to our shores’. There was mention that the High Commissioner had received 1500 applications for passages under the scheme that year, indicating that many applicants were rejected. A few of the recruitment sheets which survive from the New Zealand High Commission in London suggest that, in accordance with the scheme, only those with experience as domestics were accepted, and those
with other skills such as masseuse and mental nurse were rejected. While free passages were offered as an incentive, there was no aid with the fare to reach the port. According to the surviving records, the New Zealand authorities were recruiting almost entirely in Scotland and the North of Ireland. It was suggested that heavy rail fares to ports of embarkation prevented ‘particularly women for domestic service’, from migrating.

For all destinations, it appears that families used the scheme for reunification. As well as women independently applying to the New Zealand High Commission in Britain for an assisted passage under the scheme, any person living in New Zealand, family, friend or future employer, could nominate, or sponsor, a woman for migration. In the case of domestic service, both direct assistance and nomination qualified for the free passage and gratuity and were subject to the same conditions. Hence family members already in New Zealand — and as in need of domestic assistance as the next family — were able to nominate women under the scheme, and reunify their families without cost. For New Zealand, the number assisted in the early 1920s was higher than those nominated, but as the scheme waned, nomination took over. In 1927 the YWCA commented that there were fewer girls in its buildings, as the department was only sending those to New Zealand who already had friends or relatives. It appears that a free passage and work for relatives was a convenient way for women who were joining family in New Zealand to migrate.

The shortage of domestic labour in New Zealand, combined with the relatively small numbers of British women migrating, meant that sophisticated labour bureaux were not needed. In 1921 the YWCA commented that ‘every time there is an arrival of an immigrant ship our Association is besieged with inquiries as to whether we have any of these girls’. There is evidence that women were snapped up at the ports of arrival. In 1920 Harriet Morison reported that the Women’s Labour Bureau had been swamped with hundreds of inquiries for domestics from Auckland housewives ‘ever on the alert to secure help’. Each one, she said ‘could have been placed a dozen times over’. There were also reports of New Zealand women who sought servants going directly to England to recruit, and then nominating girls. They met them as the ships arrived in New Zealand and whisked them away. Discussion about re-opening labour bureaux surfaced during the 1920s, but in 1930 the small number of migrants were still being ‘placed quietly by the Association’.

Table 2 shows the regional destinations where, according to the Department of Immigration’s records, domestics first found work after they had disembarked in Auckland and Wellington. While nominated women went to join their nominators around the country, the immigration authorities attempted to spread assisted women throughout New Zealand. Although it was hoped that provinces such as Marlborough, Westland, Southland, Nelson and Taranaki would receive domestics, as Table 2 shows, few women went there. Because there was such a shortage of domestics, migrants could afford to be selective in choosing both their region of employment and particular positions. Despite the government’s ideal of migrants working in the country areas, the majority stayed in town. Table 2 shows the vast majority were in the Wellington region, followed by the Auckland region. The Canterbury region, with presumably Christchurch as the largest place of employment, was third, and Otago, presumably with Dunedin
absorbing most of the domestics, was fourth. The women were able to demand good positions in grand homes, preferably with a friend, or another servant. In 1923 the Dunedin YWCA commented of the scheme that it ‘has been fairly simple to manage, though a good deal of time is often involved finding work to fit in with the ideas of the girls themselves. This is specially the case in a town such as ours with very few large homes and therefore a small number of places available offering work for two girls at once’. Domestics perceived safety in the city, and safety and companionship in numbers. This is understandable, given evidence such as Mary Wilkinson’s account of domestic service during the Depression in which she reveals the vulnerability of young women in private homes, and the dangers that existed.

It was hoped that up to 2500 domestics a year might be absorbed. This figure was never realized. In the peak years of 1923–1927, 651 was the greatest number to arrive in one year (see Table 1). The situation was so disappointing that, rather than being overworked, the YWCA profited from the government subsidy. By 1924 the YWCA felt that it was not using the subsidy honestly. From Auckland the YWCA’s General Secretary wrote to the Business Secretary in Wellington: ‘I think I have already written to you saying that I do not think that we are dealing quite fairly with the Government in the use of their subsidy. Our own immigration Committee feels this very strongly. They feel that we have no right to receive any money from the Government unless we are expending the whole lot of it in immigration work’. However, realizing that it did have value for money, despite constant threats of discontinuation, the government did not end the subsidy until April 1931. Thereafter the YWCA billed the government for its work on an ad hoc basis.

Much of the YWCA’s work drew upon its maternal identity, with local women working as surrogate mothers for the migrant women. Providing ‘homes away from home’ was one such objective. A 1927 report from Wellington suggested that ‘The home on Boulcott Street is truly the home of the overseas girls. There they come for help, counsel, and advice; there they meet their friends and there, time after time is the bugbear of homesickness driven away. To many girls the arrival of the Home mail is received with mingled feeling ... many feel lonely again’. When the government subsidy was stopped, the YWCA wrote to the Minister of Immigration listing the extent of its labours. Amongst its work was assisting women to find employment, accommodation in-between posts, organizing the readdressing of letters for several hundred women, making inquiries about women on behalf of relations, organizing clubs and providing lounges and restrooms for Sunday and afternoons off duty, holding welcome parties, social reunions at Christmas time and other occasions, sometimes for as many as 150 women at a time.

Not all the help was for positive situations. The YWCA claimed to offer help in adverse situations, dealing with ‘impecunious circumstances’, including visiting girls in hospital with fruit and flowers. A 1930 report told that ‘one girl was married some time ago, lost her husband, has been in ill health and now with her little boy is being cared for at Holiday House’. The Auckland YWCA Report for 1927 noted ‘nervous depression for one overseas girl’. After a spell in hospital, she went to the Holiday House to convalesce, and was able to start work again after a couple of weeks. Another girl, whose ‘mental balance has
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become strained, was befriended and arrangements made for her return to her people in Scotland’, it reported.\(^9\) The 1930 report told of ‘one girl, through an accident to her finger resulting in septic poisoning was disabled for life. She has been given practical help. Two girls became so ill that they were not fit to work and they were returned to their own country; also to others, whose folk were in ill health’.\(^{100}\) Here is evidence of repatriation because of ill health. At the time, Canada was an eager deporter,\(^{101}\) but from the YWCA evidence it appears that New Zealand’s distance from Britain saw a concerted effort to work with those who were perceived as behaving inappropriately. For example, a ‘girl who had fallen into bad company and had been ill for some weeks was transferred to Wellington, as it was thought to have her under the direct supervision of Miss McLean [Superintendent of Immigrant Girls] and away from her associates’.\(^{102}\) The few specific references to troublesome migrants were made about Irish women. There was the ‘red hot little Irish girl who objected to work for a Jew’.\(^{103}\) A 1930 Auckland Report suggests that ‘a rather young inefficient and difficult group of girls’ arrived last February. ‘Two of these have been constantly under medical attention (provided free in such cases). Another who is 18 was causing difficulties with petty thefts and wanton behaviour and has been put in a home by Miss MacLeod [of the YWCA]. Two more of ignorant Irish type have found it hard to fit into positions, one has been in six places in nine months’.\(^{104}\)

What can we know about the initiatives of these women and their experiences? Marilyn Barber has suggested that ‘for the most part, the lives of the immigrant domestics remain obscure, and it is impossible to determine how many married, went into other employment, or returned to their country of origin’.\(^{105}\) The fates of another group targeted at the same time and later — children — have received much disturbing attention. From the impact on individuals who suffered brutal abuse, the merits of ‘empire settlement’ have been questioned.\(^{106}\) There is reason to suspect that domestics were also subject to abuse. Mostly working alone in private homes, women were dependent on the goodwill of their employers. From their perspective, the immigration authorities sought to protect women from potential abusive, or even pleasurable, behaviour during the process of migration that might threaten the prospect of women arriving in New Zealand ‘marriageable’ and employable, according to the mores of the time.

During the 1920s, authorities went to great lengths to control domestics, implementing increased protection and surveillance of migrants. Migrants were encouraged to correspond with the SOSBW in Britain. Their published letters follow a pattern. But as only positive letters were printed, it is likely that those who were unhappy in their new situations did not put pen to paper. The usual formula ran: ‘New Zealand’, or Australia or Canada or Rhodesia, ‘is a wonderful country’. Then came a paragraph about the amazing hospitality and friendliness of the local people, followed by an account of travel through the country and the observation of ‘natural’ wonders.\(^{107}\) A letter written about New Zealand ‘pays tribute to the YWCA in New Zealand, to whose care the society commends many new settlers’. ‘A.F.’ continued that ‘the YWCA is doing a very good work here amongst the oversea girls. They sent one of their secretaries to meet us at the wharf and took care of us till we were settled with situations. I am pleased to say I have an excellent situation here and have found a great many
friends here that are very kind to us..." Another correspondent wrote that she wished ‘to express to you again my gratitude for assisting me to come out to the colonies. I am very very happy despite the hard work on a farm. I am well in the backblocks... This district is composed of newly cleared land all up and down, great deep gulleys utterly impossible to wholly cultivate. I am keeping house for my nephews and the boys are so thankful to have a comfortable house and good meals. We all appreciate your kindness’. Her work for relatives reinforces the point that women used the scheme for family reunification.

In contrast to the SOSBW propaganda, in New Zealand there was some concern about the ‘quality’ of the immigrants being sent. The 1927 Report of Annual Meeting of the Women’s Division of the New Zealand Farmers’ Union (WDNZFU) recommended ‘that the Government be urged to exercise a more careful scrutiny of migrants, particularly from the point of view of public health’. It added that ‘That government be asked to enquire much more carefully into the bona fides of nominators of immigrants, thus eliminating the indiscriminate and comparatively unchecked nominations of unsuitable persons’.

In the same vein, there was concern expressed about the character of nominators of immigrants, suggesting that nominators were not providing the promised work, with the effect that the women ‘become a burden and a tax upon the people and the land’. The president of the Women’s Division of the Farmers’ Union asked the YWCA about its scheme, and commented that there should be better selection and more agents in Britain.

The concerns of rural women were centered around the ability of migrant women to adapt to rural conditions. The YWCA itself reported that the women migrants were often ‘delicate and inexperienced and never want to take country positions’. There was the feeling among rural women that migrants were not prepared for rural life. It was suggested that there should be ‘no misapprehension, ascertain the number in the family, the room the girl would have to sleep in, the distance from a church, and what part of the country the girl would go to’. Echoing the sentiments of other middle-class women’s organizations, they suggested sending ‘middle-class girls to help build up the Empire, to help women on the land’. The story was then narrated that ‘a lady in Timaru had told her two girls came out under this scheme, and they were getting 35/- a week in the country. They stayed two months and said they could not stand it any longer. This question could with advantage be discussed at Branch meetings’.

Officials at all levels of ‘Empire Settlement’ were aware of the problems of untrained domestics and of the difficulty of adaptation to new environments which, despite the claims of empire unity, could be very different. One remedy was in the setting up of domestic training hostels. Although the post-war London Khaki University of Canada, set up by the Canadian government to prepare British war brides for Canadian housekeeping and life, was never replicated, more attempts at pre-departure as well as post-arrival training were made as the 1920s progressed. In Sydney in 1923 a Mrs Macdonald attempted to establish a domestic training hostel through her Domestic Immigration Society, where up to 150 single women migrants could be trained in cooking and housework before being dispatched for employment in country districts of New South Wales. However, it cost too much and the topics were thought better handled before arrival in Australia. To meet such pre-departure demand, the Market
Harborough British training centre was established in December 1927. There is evidence that despite its hard and fast rule of accepting only experienced domestic servants, New Zealand began to use the centre for 'certain cases who could not show the necessary two years' preliminary employment in Great Britain or their own homes'. However, by the time that there was more interest in the dominions in domestic training in Britain, and pre-boarding hostels and training places were gaining momentum, the effects of the Depression were setting in, and efforts were short lived.

The 1925 case of Margaret Little and Annie Meldrum illustrated the hopes of the migrants, as well as the confidence and forthrightness that they could display. The two women arrived in Auckland, and then proceeded to Dunedin. When the YWCA charged them board after their first free night they wrote to the High Commissioner in London to complain about their treatment. He asked the Department of Immigration to inquire about the procedure for charging domestics and, further, if it was necessary for maids proceeding to towns other than Wellington to secure their own situations. He advised that he was giving promises in London: ‘In the past I advised approved applicants that upon arrival in New Zealand they would be accommodated at the YWCA Hostel until the first domestic position was found by the authorities and the charges would be born by the department. Would you please have me informed whether or not this is correct’.

The YWCA replied that the two had refused general positions, wanting housemaid positions, and that the 24-hour free rule is ‘hard and fast’ as ‘often girls are very difficult to place, they refuse to go where there are children unless they get every night out and every Sunday. Often are not keen to start work after the long voyage and want to hang around while the boat is in port’.

The British women who migrated under the scheme were no different from New Zealanders, moving out of domestic service at the first opportunity. At the time, domestic service was still the single largest employment area for women, but it was older women, trained to do nothing else, who predominated. The 15–20 year age group went into commerce as much as domestic service. It appears that, if at all possible, the British migrants completed their year of service and did no more. While in 1922 a domestic might earn 22–25s. a week, pay could be as little as 5s. a week. Meanwhile, in industry, the average minimum weekly wage was 42s. for a tailoress and 47s. for a boot worker. A cook in a hotel could expect 78s. and a housemaid 60s. a week. Sandra Coney has suggested that ‘it was no wonder that domestic work, even though some homes now had vacuum cleaners and gas or electric cookers, was an unattractive proposition’.

Ironically, as ‘British stock’, it was constructions of race that allowed the women access to the same job occupations as other New Zealanders. The only exception to the demand for British domestics at the time was in South Africa, where, from 1900–1939 increasing numbers of black servants were employed and the demand for British domestic labour declined. Rather than offer an incentive, the introduction of labour-saving devices was held back in South Africa by the use of low status labour: ‘The face in the kitchen was black not white’. In New Zealand, the idea of Maori as domestic servants was briefly mooted. Some thought that the Queen Victoria School ‘ought to be a source of
trained maidservants for Pakeha ladies", but overall this notion was rejected.\textsuperscript{124} A combination of Maori women shunning domestic service and Pakeha not turning to Maori as domestics meant that New Zealand's path diverged from that of South Africa.\textsuperscript{125}

Contrary to the propaganda, domestics were not always treated as part of the family. Some faced local resentment for fulfilling one of the broad objectives of empire settlement: reproduction of the population. In her novel \textit{Nor the Years Condemn}, Robin Hyde made mention of ‘the pink cheeked English and Scotch Lassies who came out under the immigration schemes . . . staffed the public institutions and half the private houses, and were cordially detested by the New Zealand girls, who felt a growing rivalry over the service jobs they did not want for themselves, and feared, moreover, that the immigrants might carry off their future husbands. Husband hunting, they called it; coming out as bold as brass, most of them without a penny in their pockets, swanning about towns, expecting to be everybody at a moment, and talking loud in those broad, ridiculous accents.'\textsuperscript{126}

The evidence points toward marriage as the eventual, if not immediate lot of the majority of ‘surplus’ women, as it was the lot of the majority of New Zealand adults at the time. Some met their future husbands on the voyage out or through immigrant networks.\textsuperscript{127} It was, after all, such sentiments of reproduction upon which the scheme was based. With the demand for domestic service, however, it was in the New Zealand government’s pragmatic interest to keep women in domestic service for as long as possible. This was reflected in the stipulation that girls not marry for a year, and in the government’s insistence that the passage money be repaid should the contract be broken. From the YWCA records, some women married within a year of arrival in New Zealand, sometimes breaking their agreement with the government. In 1930 the YWCA was still organizing weddings. During that year five girls were married, and it was ‘necessary for three girls to go into the Maternity Home’.\textsuperscript{128} If the British women who came to New Zealand were similar to those who went to Canada in 1920, as the Director of the Women’s Branch of Canada’s Department of Immigration commented, of the recent arrivals, most had married, and ‘there are times when I think that I am just running a matrimonial bureau’.\textsuperscript{129} Although marriage satisfied the broader, long-term imperial objectives of the scheme, it clashed with the immediate and local domestic labour shortage.

The domestic servants scheme represented ideas that belonged to a bygone era. In the 1920s women had newly earned political status, wider work experiences and were demanding more challenging employment opportunities. In comparison with Canada and Australia, due to the small numbers and a great demand for domestics, New Zealand was able to maintain a well-organized scheme. But the small number of migrants meant that its impact was slight and the scheme misplaced. The 4504 women who did migrate and stayed in New Zealand blended into wider groupings of British migrants. Labelled ‘homies’ and ‘oversea’ migrants, they became a part of the general fabric of New Zealand society.

Domesticity was at the forefront of plans for empire settlement. It was considered the ‘natural’ occupation for women as reproducers of the next generation of citizens; and with the ‘servant shortage’ it was also a convenient,
paid, interim occupation that women were able to utilize to migrate. Ironically, the more bureaucracy that accompanied migration, the more choice women migrants possessed, and the greater was their agency in supporting or subverting the imperial and national objectives of migration. Those who chose to migrate sought opportunity and happiness. Unwittingly, the idea of ‘surplus’ may have helped them in their pursuit of self-betterment. Where the women have become well known, such as in the case of Connie Birchfield, the scheme itself is not explicitly mentioned. Perhaps this can be taken as evidence of the disjuncture between imperial and national rhetoric, and personal agency. In their very construction as ‘surplus’ labour, women exerted an often unconscious and unassuming control over grandiose plans that were grounded in the heterosexist and colonial starting point that it was somehow wrong and unnatural, and definitely wasteful, to have an uneven distribution of the sexes.

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NOTES

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2 Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR), 1921, D-1, p.5.

3 Janice Gothard, ‘“The Healthy, Wholesome British Domestic Girl”: Single Female Migration and the Empire Settlement Act, 1922–1930’, in Stephen Constantine, ed., Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars, Manchester and New York, 1990, pp.72–95, p.73. Approximately 5000 women went to Australia. With only a very small number of women emigrating to South Africa at this time, I would suggest that the estimated figure of 100,000 should be 90,000 at the most.


6 Kennedy, p.407.

7 Ibid.

8 Blakeley, pp.423–4.

9 Constantine, p.8.

10 Swaisland, p.5.


16 Constantine, p.4.
18 Constantine, p.16.
20 Blakeley, p.444.
21 Schultz, p.150.
22 Kennedy, p.416.
23 Blakeley, p.415.
25 Kennedy, p.415.
26 Plant, p.5.
29 New Zealand: The Better Britain, 1926, p.4.
30 ibid., pp.4–5.
31 AJHR, 1919, D-1, p.1.
32 Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP) 6744 Dominion Office, p.4.
33 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD), 1919, 185, p.483.
34 NZPD, 1920, 189, p.1022.
35 cit. Coney, Every Girl, p.100.
36 NZPD, 1919, 184, p.330.
37 ibid.
42 Blakeley, p.420.
44 Miss McLean, ‘Superintendent of Immigrant Girls’ at the Department of Immigration was likely to have been one such woman.
46 SOSBW 2nd Annual Report, 1921, p.5.
48 Memo relating to the inquiry now being made in New Zealand by the Delegates of the British Government Overseas Settlement Committee, p.1, YWCA MS Papers 1536 2:10:2D, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington.
49 ibid.
51 Memo relating to the inquiry now being made in New Zealand by the Delegates of the British Government Oversea Settlement Committee, p.1.
52 Confidential Memorandum Supplied By Delegates of Oversea Settlement Mission to New Zealand to YWCA, YWCA Papers 1536 2:10 2D, ATL.
53 Memo relating to inquiry now being made in New Zealand, p.1.
54 AJHR, 1920, D-9, p.1.
55 MG 28, I 17, 4, 2, 8 September 1926, p.122, NAC.
57 MG 28, I 17, 4, 2, 8 September 1926, p.122.
58 Gothard, p.80.
59 SOSPW 12th Annual Report, 1931, p.11. AJCP, M 2306, ANL.
60 ibid., SOSPW 10th Annual Report, 1929, p.10.
61 Monk, p.20.
62 ibid., p.52.
63 cit. Monk, p.52.
64 Monk, p.52.
65 SOSPW 7th Annual Report, 1926, p.61, AJCP, M2306, ANL.
66 Memorandum from Thomson, Under-Secretary for Immigration to Minister of Immigration, 29 October, 1920. Department of Labour, YWCA aid to Immigrant Girls, L 1 129a, National Archives (NA), Wellington.
67 ibid., Memorandum from Under-Secretary for Immigration to Minister of Immigration, 17 November 1920.
68 President, NZ Field Committee to Under-Secretary for Immigration, 16 March 1920, YWCA Papers 1536 2:10:2D, ATL.
69 Report from Wellington, November 1927, YWCA aid to Immigrant Girls, L1 129a, NA.
70 ibid., YWCA Secretary to Under-Secretary for Immigration, 6 November 1926.
71 ibid., YWCA Second Report, November 1927, Wellington.
72 See Coney, Every Girl, and Simpson for accounts of the Girl Citizen Movement.
73 Auckland Report for year ending 30 June 1927. YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, NA.
75 Auckland Report for year ending 30 June 1927. YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, NA.
76 Gothard, p.89.
77 Barber, 'Sunny Ontario', p.56.
78 Gothard, p.90.
79 ibid.
81 AJHR, 1921, D-9, p.1.
82 AJHR 1921, D-9, p.4.
83 Miscellaneous Committees 1920–27, Candidates Interviewed and Papers Considered, July 1921, p.38, AJCP, M 2304, ANL.
84 AJCP 6744 Dom Office. The creation of the Irish republic in 1921 affected ‘British’ recruitment possibilities for the 1920s.
85 Gothard, p.57.
86 Auckland Report for Year Ending 30 June 1927. YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, L 1 129a, NA.
87 Griffin to Thomson, 8 April 1921, ibid.
88 Coney, Every Girl, p.102.
89 ibid., p.101.
90 There was mention of the principle of ‘placing girls quietly’ in the early 1920s. Girls’ Superintendent, Department of Immigration to Miss Griffin, General Secretary YWCA, 4 May 1921, L 1 129a YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, NA.
91 Dunedin Report 23-10-23, YWCA Papers, MS 1536 2:10:2D, ATL.
93 Jean Stevenson, Acting-General Secretary, Auckland, to Ella Fair, Business Secretary, 8 August 1924, YWCA Papers, MS 1536 2:10:2D, ATL.
94 Memo from the Treasury to the Secretary of Immigration, 31 March 1931, L 1 129a YWCA
Aid to Immigrant Girls, NA. Recommendation 2 was ‘that the restricted immigration policy be restricted as far as possible in view of the financial position, and that the immigration of domestic servants be discontinued’.

95 ibid., Second Report from Wellington, November 1927.
96 YWCA National General Secretary Bridgman to Hon. J.A. Young, Minister for Immigration, Wellington, 28 October 1931, ibid.
97 YWCA to Minister for Immigration, 28 October 1931, ibid.
98 Report from Every Girl, 5 July 1930, ibid.
99 Auckland Report Year ending 30 June 1927, ibid.
100 Report from Every Girl, 5 July 1930, ibid.
102 YWCA Auckland Report Year Ending 30 June 1927, L1 129a, YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, ATL. Miss McLean was Superintendent of Immigrant Girls at the Department of Immigration.
103 Elsie Griffin, YWCA General Secretary, Auckland, to Miss McLean, Department of Immigration, 30 April 1921. YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, L1 129a, NA.
104 1 April–30 November 1930, Auckland Report, L 1 129a, YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, ATL.
105 Marilyn Barber, The Women Ontario Welcomed’, p.120.
107 Monk, p.77, and SOSBW annual reports.
109 ibid., p.8.
111 ibid., p.27.
112 Auckland Report for Year Ending 30 June 1927, YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls L1 129a, NA.
113 WDNZFU, p.27, ATL.
114 Gothard, p.84.
115 ibid.
117 Gothard, p.86.
118 Memorandum no. 272, 9 June 1925, L1 129a YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, NA.
119 ibid., 26 May 1925 Memo for the Under Secretary from Girls’ Superintendent A. McLean, 26 May 1925.
120 Coney, Every Girl, p.103.
121 ibid.
122 Report in Every Girl, 5 July, 1930, L 1 129a YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, NA.
123 Swaisland, p.96. There was still demand for single British middle-class women as teachers and nurses.
125 ibid., p.225. There is great need for further research on the history of Maori women as servants for Pakeha, and in the agency of Maori women in avoiding domestic service. Certainly, the practice existed at least from missionary times, but the specifics remain hidden. See Charlotte Macdonald, ‘Strangers of the Hearth: The Eclipse of Domestic Service in New Zealand Homes c.1830s–1940s’, in Barbara Brookes, ed., At Home in New Zealand: History, Houses, People, Wellington, 2000, pp.41–56; and Melanie Nolan, Breadwinning: New Zealand Women and the State, Christchurch, 2000, ch.4.
126 Robin Hyde, Nor the Years Condemn, Auckland, 1938, p.118. Cit. in Coney, Every Girl, pp.104–5.
127 Personal communication with the son of a migrant, May 1997.
128 Ethel Law, YWCA to Under-Secretary for Immigration, 1 December 1930. L1 129a YWCA Aid to Immigrant Girls, NA.
129 Kennedy, p.410.