

VICTORIA.

EMPLOYMENT OF LABOR.

REPORT OF THE BOARD

APPOINTED TO CONSIDER THE VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS MADE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENABLING

THE UNEMPLOYED TO FIND EMPLOYMENT

AND

THE EMPLOYER LABOR.



PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

By Authority:

JOHN HARRIS, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

APPROXIMATE COST OF REPORT.

	£	s.	d.
Preparation---Not given.			
Printing (775 copies)	3	10	0



REPORT.

192 Collins street East,
17th November 1874.

THE Board appointed "to consider the various suggestions made for the purpose of enabling the unemployed to find employment and the employer labor" have now the honor to report for the information of the Government the conclusions at which they have arrived.

They have carefully considered the correspondence and various documents submitted to them by the Government, including the report of the committee appointed at a public meeting held at the Apollo Hall on the 2nd October last, and the papers connected therewith, and have also been favored by the Honorary Secretary of the Immigrants' Aid Society with a very exhaustive and valuable statement as to the efforts made from time to time for many years past by the committee of that society to impress on the Government the desirability of establishing a Public Labor Office, to which statement they attach considerable importance, and by which they have been much aided in their labors.

Board have considered suggestions.

The Board have not deemed it necessary to invite persons to give evidence, as they consider that the papers mentioned, together with the personal experience of the members in their various capacities during many years' residence in the colony, are sufficient to justify them in arriving at a fair conclusion.

Report founded on written suggestions.

They are unanimously of opinion:—

That the establishment of a Public Labor Exchange would be of very great and general advantage, and they consider that such institution should be commenced with as little delay as possible.

Public Labor Exchange should be instituted at once.

The Board are of opinion that it would supply a great public want, viz., that of means for bringing the employer and those seeking employment throughout the colony into communication, and thus would economize much valuable time that is now lost in the absence of any organized system of readily available interchange. The exchange would be valuable as a labor barometer in indicating the actual state of the labor market; would be of great advantage to newly arrived immigrants as a source whence reliable and disinterested information and advice could be obtained, and through which they could find employment suited to their various capacities, without incurring the vexatious and heart-depressing delays, so frequently experienced by new-comers, that fritter away any little means they may possess; would by a careful registration of the persons seeking employment, be an incentive for good conduct on their part, as honesty, sobriety, and steadiness would meet the reward of ready employment at full wages; would enable the employer of labor to find what he requires without delay, and procure servants of good character; and would, in the event of the resumption of assisted immigration, relieve the Government of the burthen of finding suitable employment for immigrants.

Objects thereof.

The Board consider that, with some assistance from the Government, to enable the management to meet the preliminary expenses necessarily attendant on the establishment of such an institution, it will be self-supporting. To meet these preliminary expenses, they think that the sum of £1,000 will be sufficient to be placed at the disposal of the management as a loan to be repaid to the Government when the funds of the institution will allow.

Government to pay preliminary expenses.

£1,000 to be paid if funds allow.

The Board consider that it will also be necessary that the Government furnish office accommodation in Melbourne, and provide—

Government to provide furniture, &c., and free telegrams.

- Office furniture,
 - Books,
 - Forms,
 - Stationery,
 - Franked envelopes, and
 - Free use of telegraph lines when required.
- } to start with.

The Board are of opinion that the management should be independent of Government control; but as the confidence of the public is essential to the success

Management to be apart from Government.

Committee to consist of six members. of the proposed institution, the appointment of the Committee of Management should at all times vest in the Government. The committee should consist of six members, three to form a quorum, and they should have the appointment and control of all the subordinate officers.

Managing staff in Melbourne. The Board recommend that the staff for the conduct of the business of the Labor Exchange in Melbourne should, in the first instance, consist of—

A Manager, at per annum	...	...	...	...	£300
Clerk	"	...	...	...	150
Matron	"	...	...	...	150
Assistant-Matron, at per annum	...	...	...	...	100
Messenger	"	...	...	...	100

Agents in country districts.

In the country districts agents might be appointed, whose remuneration should be a reasonable proportion of the amount of the fees collected by them on behalf of the Exchange ; and it is suggested that such agents should be the Deputy-Registrars of Births and Deaths, as those officials are generally well known in their respective localities.

Scale of fees to be charged.

The following scale of fees is suggested :—

To applicants for employment—

					s.	d.
For registration	...	...	...	...	1	0
When employment is obtained—Ten per cent. on one week's wages at average rate						

To employers—

For a single engagement	...	...	...	...	5	0
More than one and not more than five engagements	...	each			4	0
More than five and not more than ten engagements	...	each			3	0
Any number more than ten engagements	...	each			2	6

When fees to be paid. General fund.

All fees (except for registration) to be paid when contract of engagement is signed, and to form part of a general fund under the control of the Committee of Management.

Managing committee to frame details.

The Board do not consider they need enter into any further details for working the scheme, as they think such details should be proposed by the Committee of Management. They wish, however, to impress on the Government that a main feature in the Labor Exchange should be a carefully kept Register, showing the history, so far as possible, the various situations held by, and the previous character of, all persons obtaining employment through its means. The systems adopted in the Shipping Office and the Immigrants' Home are suggested as suitable models.

Office accommodation.

The Board have already stated that they consider that the head office accommodation should be provided by the Government, and they recommend that the Exchange should be situated in a central position, and should be capable of affording distinct accommodation and waiting rooms for males and females, and requisite offices for Manager, Matron, &c.

Old Telegraph Office suitable.

In a letter addressed to the Honorable the Premier, on the 27th October last, the Board indicated the building formerly used as a Telegraph Office, and now temporarily occupied by the Customs Department, as a suitable one, but they cannot point out any other building in the hands of the Government in the event of that office not being available.

No statistics obtainable.

As three years and a half have elapsed since the last Census was taken, and as no later reliable information can be had as to the number of persons out of employment, the Board have no statistical data on which to base their conclusions.

Success depends on committee and officers.

They do, however, feel confident that, with a well selected Committee of Management, who would take an interest in the work, and with a carefully appointed staff of officers capable of inspiring the general public with confidence, there can be little doubt of the future prosperity of the proposed Public Labor Exchange.

(Signed)

GEO. COPPIN, Chairman ;
 JOHN CURTAIN,
 J. T. HARCOURT, } Members ;
 LESLIE A. MOODY, }
 EDWARD CARLILE, Secretary.