

CHEAP FEMALE LABOUR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir,—The disparaging attacks on women workers by your correspondents are most unfair. That they are cheap labour is not the fault of the women workers, who have repeatedly stressed their claim for equal pay. The lower wage which women are paid is imposed on them by the laws of the State, the declared basic wage for men being £3/6/6, and for women £1/16/.

As for the accusation that the girls are "scarlet lipped" and "overdressed," I would draw the attention of your correspondents to the fact that girls have to compete in the open market for jobs, and that if they are so described, it must be that the employers prefer them so.

Unemployment is a tragedy. It is more of a tragedy for a man with dependants and a woman with dependants than for men and women without. Let us not forget that the money earned by a woman is as necessary to her and her family as the money earned by a man is necessary for him and his family. The tragedy of unemployment will exist as long as there are men and women wanting work who cannot get it. Turning out women workers will not cure unemployment; it will only shift the burden.

For the first time in history women can support themselves honestly and decently, so let us think hard before we prevent them.

I am, etc.,

JESSIE STREET.

Sydney, Feb. 20.