

SCHEME No. 4A : ASSISTANCE ON OWN FARMS.

This scheme during its operation for three months of this year—namely, 1st April, 1939, to 30th June, 1939—provided a measure of assistance with living-expenses to those farmers whose properties were either too small or insufficiently developed to be self-supporting.

The assistance was granted in the form of a weekly allowance dependent on the conjugal classification of the applicant, and also upon the returns being derived from the property, together with income from any other source. Assistance was usually confined to the off season, but in some cases it was found necessary to continue at a reduced rate during the summer months.

On 1st July, 1939, the scheme was terminated, and the records of the 185 persons, comprising 68 single and 117 married men, being assisted were transferred to the Social Security Department with a view to assistance being continued by means of an emergency benefit.

SCHEME No. 4B.—FARM-LANDS DEVELOPMENT.

This scheme provides for subsidies of up to 75 per cent. of the labour-cost of improvement work on farms.

The object of the scheme is to induce farmers to put in hand useful improvement-works with a view to increasing the productivity of their lands and to provide a desirable avenue of employment for available unemployed labour.

The subsidies which apply in respect of the various classes of work are as follows :—

For developmental work, such as bush-felling, stumping, logging, subdivisional fencing, cutting new drains, deepening and widening existing drains, &c., subsidies of up to 75 per cent. of the actual labour-cost may be approved without the necessity of the farmer submitting to a “means test.”

For maintenance-works, such as deferred scrub-cutting, first and subsequent two top-dressings of hill country or other country that is not suitable for machine top-dressing and is to be done by hand; deferred cleaning-out of large drains, renewal of subdivisional fences where substantial amounts of new materials are involved, &c., the granting of subsidies of up to 75 per cent. of the actual labour-cost is considered in relation to the financial position of the farmer as disclosed in a financial statement which is required to be submitted with each such application.

During the year an agreement was concluded between the Hon. the Minister of Labour and the New Zealand Workers' Union covering terms and conditions of employment under Scheme No. 4B.

The main point in this agreement is the drawing-up of a specific contract in respect of each job setting out the nature of the work and the contract price; the contract to be signed by the farmer and by all members of the contract party, thus safeguarding the interests of all concerned. The agreement also provides that where practicable a representative of the workers, or, if possible, all members of the proposed contract party, be transported free of cost by the farmer to the area to be worked so as to permit them to inspect the work prior to entering into the contract.

General Conditions.—The men required are allocated from those registered as unemployed. Subsidy is *not* granted in respect of unregistered men or even in respect of registered men started without the approval of the Labour Department.

The farmer is required to accept full liability for accident insurance, to supply materials (where necessary), tools, accommodation, &c., and also provide transport (at the commencement and completion of the job) to and from the worker's home locality.

This scheme has continued to be one of the main employment-promotion measures administered by the Employment Division. Moreover, the important part which farm development work has assumed in relation to New Zealand's war effort has inevitably lent Scheme No. 4B a much greater significance.

Work on 2,347 Scheme No. 4B contracts was put in hand during the year under review, and 4,402 men who qualified for Social Security Unemployment Benefits were transferred to these contracts. The amount paid out in subsidies under the scheme for the same period was £113,633.

During the past financial year contracts in respect of which subsidies were paid under this scheme have produced the results stated below :—

Estimated stock increase—

Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	49,448
Cows	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6,654
Cattle	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,059

Work completed—

Scrub-cutting	..	..	..	..	42,533	acres.
Gorse-grubbing	..	..	..	..	14,699	„
Stumping	..	..	..	..	2,979	„
Bushfelling	..	..	..	..	2,442	„
					—————	62,653 acres.
Drains dug, deepened, and widened	..	..	..	..	63,042	chains.
Fencing and stone-walling	..	..	..	..	18,592	„

In addition to the above work, an immense amount of stop-bank erection, top-dressing, track and road formation providing access to backblock areas, tree-felling, bridge-erection, flood-damage restoration, &c., has been undertaken.