

1940.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# UTILIZATION OF THE MAN-POWER OF THE DOMINION.

STATEMENT BY THE HON. D. WILSON, MINISTER OF MAN-POWER.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.*

As part of the Government's scheme for preparedness in the event of war, a special Committee representative of all Government Departments concerned with the problem of man-power was set up prior to the outbreak of hostilities. The Committee carefully considered methods for preserving essential industries and services, and the available British statements and other material bearing on the subject were studied. It was clear that one of the first steps necessary in the event of war would be to guard against the indiscriminate withdrawal of men from industry.

Accordingly a Schedule of Reserved Occupations was prepared on the recommendations of the appropriate committees established by the Organization for National Security. This Schedule comprised the essential occupations in New Zealand's industries, and when mobilization commenced shortly after the outbreak of war the Government directed that men actually engaged in these occupations should not be accepted for military service until full investigation had been made.

It was quite apparent, however, that the adoption of a method of investigating individual cases as far as possible would be most necessary, as experience showed that many men whose occupations were included in the Reserved Schedule could be released without detriment to their particular line of production, and, conversely, there were others who should be reserved although their occupations were not included in the Schedule.

Special care was taken to ensure that the primary industries were safeguarded, and the cases of farm workers who enlisted for service were subjected to very full examination to ensure that production on farms would not be jeopardized.

## CONSTITUTION OF THE CENTRAL ADVISORY LABOUR COUNCIL.

Shortly after the outbreak of war three major organizations were established by Cabinet to deal with war conditions, namely :—

The Industrial Emergency Council,  
The Primary Production Council, and  
The Factory Advisory Committee.

The Central Advisory Labour Council, representative of these three above-mentioned organizations, was constituted to co-ordinate their work in respect of man-power. The Central Advisory Labour Council was set up under the chairmanship and control of the Hon. P. C. Webb, who was appointed the first Minister of Man-power. It comprises an employers' and an employees' representative from each of the other councils and a representative of the armed Forces. The Director of Man-power is also a member of as well as Executive Officer to the Council.

The functions of the organization are to inquire into and report to the Government on all matters affecting the utilization of man-power in the Dominion, with a view to expanding national resources to the full. An important part of the work will be to review constantly the possible effect of recruiting on industry so that as the war progresses production can be maintained.

Each meeting of the Council usually involves consideration being given to a lengthy agenda covering matters pertaining to the man-power problems. It will be appreciated that these problems have entailed a great deal of investigation work, and thanks are due to the members for the manner in which they have, without any reservation, given their time and thought to these matters.

The promulgation of the Schedule of Important Occupations in place of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations was one that was given the undivided attention of the Council. This Schedule covers a list of occupations which the Government considers to be highly important in order that production and the maintenance of essential industries is not disrupted in time of

war. This Schedule has been made available to the Man-power District Advisory Committees, and it is from this list that the Committees interpret the policy to be adopted in dealing with applications for postponement.

Another important problem was the formulation of a recommendation for the regulations covering the issue of certificates and badges to those volunteers whose service with the armed Forces has been postponed on account of their importance to industry and production. After a comprehensive survey of the problems involved, recommendations were finalized, in co-operation with other interested organizations, and it is hoped that the certificates and badges will be available at an early date.

The Council gave close consideration to the problem of dealing with applications for postponement from military service. It was felt that this could best be served by the establishment of sixteen Man-power District Advisory Committees in the more important centres. It was considered that if the Committee personnel comprised men with wide experience in production methods and industrial occupations, together with extensive local knowledge, the Committees would make a valuable contribution towards the man-power activities. Committees have now been set up and have commenced to function.

Considerable thought and research was given to the problem of replacement of farm labour, and it is felt that the measures recommended to the Government, and which are being adopted, will go a long way to meet the position when the demand arises in the spring. A survey of the man-power employed on State projects has been undertaken. Departmental officers are engaged in interviewing the men on these jobs, and it is hoped that as an outcome sufficient men will be transferred to primary production to meet immediate demands for labour.

A policy of promoting housing under the Rural Housing Act, 1939, to enable married men to be engaged as farm labourers has been dealt with by the Council. The use of Public Works equipment and materials and a co-operative scheme of utilizing farm machinery have been fully considered, and the Council's recommendations are now being dealt with by expert Committees. The provision of temporary accommodation has also received attention.

The Council has considered ways and means of providing for the apprentice who enlists in the armed Forces, and it is hoped to have regulations finalized whereby those apprentices who engage in comparable work whilst on active service shall have their time counted as if they were still employed in their normal calling.

#### MAN-POWER DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

Recently the Government decided to appoint Man-power District Advisory Committees to consider and report on all matters referred to them, and to adjudicate on applications from employers for the postponement of service of any employee. In their determinations the Committees will interpret Government policy having regard to the exigencies of the war. The personnel of the Committees comprise the Chairman (representative of the local bodies in the district) and two members representing employers and employees respectively.

The Committees have been set up at the following centres: Auckland, Whangarei, Hamilton, Paeroa, New Plymouth, Wangamui, Gisborne, Napier, Masterton, Wellington, Nelson, Greymouth, Timaru, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill.

The Schedule of Reserved Occupations used since the outbreak of the war has been abolished, and comprehensive measures have been formulated in respect of the most important occupations and industries as a guide to the Committees. Experience has shown that while a definite schedule of some form is necessary as a basis from which to work, conditions change so rapidly that it is more satisfactory to deal with applications on their merits as far as possible, having regard always to the conditions in the district.

The Government has therefore laid it down as a policy that no industry or service is to be completely or permanently reserved. When periods of postponement are granted by the Committees the employer will be expected to do everything possible to obtain a replacement within the time stipulated. In general, the Committees will grant deferment of military service for short periods only, and cases will be subject to continuous review. The employers will have a right to make a further application at the end of the period, and in special cases the applications for further postponements may be granted.

In the past there has been some difficulty in retaining in their jobs men whose enlistments have been deferred by the operation of the Reserved Schedule. In cases where postponements are granted by Committees a special appeal will be made to the employee to remain at his occupation until the period of postponement expires, or until he can be satisfactorily replaced, and it is hoped that such appeals will have the desired effect. The deferred volunteer will be issued with a badge indicating that he has enlisted, together with a certificate covering the conditions of issue.

#### NATIONAL SURVEY: SOCIAL SECURITY REGISTER.

Long before international relations became acutely strained the Government had in contemplation the undertaking of some form of national survey to provide an up-to-date and reliable basis for the forecasts essential to the implementation of its programme of social legislation. Later, with the apparent imminence of hostilities, it was felt that the matter was one of urgency, and it was decided to put in hand the compilation of a Social Security Register which would, in effect, provide the facilities of a National Register for war purposes should the need unfortunately arise. The wisdom of this decision is now apparent, for the Register now in course of compilation will serve as well for wartime purposes as it would have for the promotion of the peaceful social progress which it was originally hoped would be its only utilization.

That accurate statistical information is necessary in time of war is a fact that need scarcely be stressed and is evidenced by the national registrations recently effected in Great Britain and in Australia, the latter involving the taking of a census of both persons and property.

The New Zealand Register will be kept in such a form that the potentialities of the Dominion in the application of man-power both to defence and to the production of commodities may be the most readily gauged.

The requisite administrative machinery was brought into being at short notice, and stalling difficulties are being overcome by drawing on all available suitable sources of supply and by the considerable extension of daily hours of work. The task is of some magnitude, but it is being tackled energetically and every effort is being made to ensure its compilation with the greatest possible expedition; the use of machinery in the final stages of the work will make a considerable contribution in this direction.

#### STATISTICAL INFORMATION.

Statistics are being kept in respect of the industry and occupation of every recruit who is passed medically fit for the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, for Home Defence, for the Air Force, and for the Navy. The details as to the Army enlistments have so far been obtained each week from the Placement Officers or Social Security Registrars in each of the twelve centres where the Army Area offices are located. In future these returns will be obtained at intervals of four weeks. Details as to Air Force and Navy mobilization are communicated to this branch from time to time.

As the above returns are received at this office they are transferred on to cards. So far as the Army and Home Defence enlistments are concerned, a separate card is kept for each industry in each Army area. The various occupations within each industry are listed, and the numbers withdrawn from each occupation are entered upon the card at the end of each four-weekly period. The number of fit men postponed in each occupation is shown separately on the back of the card.

The Air Force and Navy statistics are kept in the same form, except that they are kept nationally instead of by Army areas.

Periodically an analysis is made showing the number of fit men available for or posted to camp and the number postponed in each of forty-two industrial groups. As required, these industrial groups can be further divided into actual industries and, if necessary, into occupations within each industry. Government and local-body employees are shown separately. In brief, the analysis made is along the same lines as the census analysis of industries and occupations, but with the added advantage that occupations are grouped within their respective industries.

The statistics thus extracted are useful in three distinct ways. These are:—

- (a) To determine the actual response to the call for service from men in various walks of life. For this purpose a comparison is made between the number enlisting from each industry and the number of men of military age employed in that industry. At present the 1936 census figures are used for this purpose, but in a few months' time up-to-date figures will be obtained from the Social Security Register.
- (b) To determine the extent of the withdrawal of man-power from the various industries.
- (c) For the purposes of post-war occupational re-establishment, to determine the number of men who will have to be restored to each occupation after their return to New Zealand.

The following are details of men withdrawn from the main important industries and services, and also the number of men in these categories whose army service is postponed pending replacement:

Industry.	Posted to Camp.	Temporarily postponed by reason of Occupations.
Agricultural and Pastoral .. .. .	2,869	1,113
Forestry .. .. .	929	36
Production of food from raw material— <i>i.e.</i> , men engaged in slaughtering, curing, grain-milling, baking, jam and confectionery making, butter and cheese, &c.	796	118
Building, carpentry, painting, plumbing, &c. .. .. .	1,509	28
Construction and maintenance of railroads, bridges, &c. .. .. .	1,465	20
Land transport— <i>i.e.</i> , railway and tramway services, motor services and garages, traffic direction, &c.	1,993	107
Communication, postal service, telephones, radio, &c. .. .. .	465	33
Property and finance (Government administration, banking, insurance, trustee company)	629	3
Commerce: Vending and dealing in all kinds of commodities .. .. .	1,982	23
Health: All types of medical, dental, and pharmaceutical services .. .. .	315	28
Education .. .. .	235	22
Other professions .. .. .	242	3
Personal and domestic services, hotel, club, and restaurant services, hairdressing, laundrying, cleaning, &c.	564	..
Unemployed .. .. .	1,969	..
Other .. .. .	6,199	249
<b>Total .. .. .</b>	<b>22,101</b>	<b>1,781</b>

The above statement shows the trend of recruiting from the various important industries and services as at 18th May last. The figures given do not include enlistments for the Air Force, Home Defence, the Maori Battalion, and Navy reservists.

## REPLACEMENT OF MEN WITHDRAWN FROM THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.

One of the problems the Central Advisory Labour Council was called upon to consider was the maintenance of primary production, as this constituted an essential part of the Dominion's war effort. After a very careful study of the position the Government decided to proceed as follows:—

- (1) An immediate survey to be made of all public works, forestry, and other governmental works to ascertain the number of experienced farm workers thereon, and the number willing to accept farm work; also the number of men who have had no experience on farms but who are prepared to take up such employment if suitable vacancies are available.
- (2) The increasing of the subsidy paid to farmers under the Labour Department's Scheme No. 4F on the wages of untrained workers. The existing scheme has been extended to all men twenty years of age or over, whether registered as unemployed or not, and the rate of subsidy increased from 20s. per week for the first six months only, to 30s. per week for the first six months and 15s. per week for the second six months.
- (3) To meet cases where the employment of a married farm worker is necessary under war conditions but where the farm does not justify, on economic grounds, the expenditure necessary for the erection of permanent married accommodation, temporary married accommodation will be provided. Arrangements have also been made to pay a house allowance at the rate of 12s. 6d. a week to married farm workers for whose families accommodation cannot be provided on the farms, and, in addition, temporary accommodation at a low rental for both married and single farm workers.
- (4) The utilization of the facilities at Massey College, Ruakura State Farm, and other selected institutions wherever possible for the purpose of training men in the rudiments of farm work. This training will be entirely free, and the house allowance of 12s. 6d. per week will be paid in addition to the ruling rate of pay.
- (5) The popularizing of the facilities of the Rural Housing Act under which loans are available to farmers through the local bodies at the rate of 3½ per cent. for the building of small but suitable houses for married men and their families. These loans are repayable on table mortgages of twenty-five years maximum tenure. As yet there is no pronounced shortage of building materials or labour, and opposition by mortgagees is not expected. Consequently there appears to be no reason why farmers who are hampered in the employment of labour by lack of married men's accommodation should not take advantage of the scheme. A pamphlet setting out the advantages of the Act will be forwarded to all farmers at an early date.

The problems connected with the proper utilization of New Zealand's man-power resources so as to maintain and increase production, and to provide adequately for defence in the Dominion and overseas, will become increasingly important and urgent as time goes on. It is believed that the decisions already arrived at, and the deliberations of the Man-power Council, together with the active co-operation of both farmers and workers, will meet any eventualities that may arise.