

The schemes in each case were designed to provide an organization to meet emergency conditions arising from enemy attack, epidemic, earthquake, or other natural disaster, and were commended for adoption by local authorities. Generally speaking, the response was good.

Consequent on the decision of the Government to regard the schemes for the duration of the war as part of the precautions necessary for home defence, it was decided to transfer their administration to the National Service Department, and this was confirmed by the gazetting of the Emergency Precautions Regulations in August, 1940. These regulations actually constituted the Emergency Precautions Scheme and gave it its first legal standing. Power was given for the setting-up of a scheme by any local authority, and the Minister of National Service was authorized to direct any local authority to exercise this power if he thought fit. Details of the schemes themselves in their later phases of development are given in Section 18 of this report, and will not be entered into here.

The main characteristic of the Emergency Precautions organizations during the earlier phase was that, though they were designed to provide for the safety of the community as a whole, their membership was on a voluntary basis. As in all such circumstances, the real work devolved on the willing few enthusiasts and, though much useful work was done, the position of these services as regards personnel was at no time during this period regarded as fully satisfactory in the main centres and larger towns.

The Emergency Fire Service.—As fire constitutes the greatest hazard in attack from the air, and as the trained personnel and equipment available in the peacetime fire brigades, plus the limited first-aid fire-fighting appliances and personnel available through the fire section of the Emergency Precautions Services, provided insufficient cover to deal adequately with even a “hit-and-run” raid on a comparatively light scale, it was evident that this important branch of the emergency services required strengthening to provide efficient personnel and fire-fighting equipment to supplement the ordinary brigades in the centres deemed vulnerable to enemy attack.

It was accordingly decided to set up a separate branch of the Emergency Reserve Corps, and early in 1941 the Emergency Fire Service was established under the direction of a Dominion Fire Controller. While recruitment remained voluntary, it was decided that service in the E.F.S. should be paid for on the same scale as Army Territorial service, though on a part-time basis, and, in fact, for certain classes of men this duty was accepted in lieu of Territorial service. Conditions of service were gazetted which placed this branch of the Corps on a strict disciplinary basis.

The Women's War Service Auxiliary.—There had existed from pre-war days a whole complex of women's organizations, and there were few of these which were not anxious in wartime to do whatever was possible to assist the national effort. There was, however, no co-ordination among these organizations until a meeting of representatives was convened by this Department in July, 1940. From this meeting there emerged a form of constitution for a national organization comprising a Dominion Council and Central Executive, and District Committees. This organization was designated the Women's War Service Auxiliary.

The functions of the Auxiliary were to co-ordinate the work of existing organizations, to compile a register of women willing to undertake national service, and to advise and assist in all matters relating to the utilization of women in the war effort.

Training courses and groups were formed covering:—

Physical Drill	Signalling Corps
Transport	Clerical Workers
Bicycle Corps	Land Group
Emergency Hospital Workers	Mothers' Helpers
Canteen Workers	Sewing and Knitting Groups.

A distinctive uniform, together with cap and tie, was made available, through Government subsidy, at a cost of £1.

The majority of women registered with the Auxiliary are already in employment. The training is, on the whole, directed toward the meeting of emergency conditions, should they arise, rather than the replacement of men in industry. As an example, the execution of rush typing for the forces may be mentioned. The women remain in their normal civilian jobs, but when called upon are available in the evenings and week-ends as reinforcements to the typing and clerical staffs of the forces. At the same time much useful assistance has been and is being given to the forces through the part-time activities of canteen workers, sewing groups, and others.

Particular reference should also be made to the service performed by the Auxiliary in the selection of women personnel to proceed overseas with the 2nd N.Z.E.F. and in the recruitment of women since as early as January, 1941, for service with the Air Force. (Later developments in connection with the use of women in the forces are described in Section 17 of this report.)

Another important function of the W.W.S.A. has been the supply of female personnel to the Emergency Precautions Services, while on the industrial side the early organization of the Women's Land Corps was also undertaken by the Auxiliary.

The W.W.S.A. has played a valuable part in co-ordinating the many wartime activities of women's organizations and acting as a channel of communication between these organizations and the Government.

9. REVIEW OF THE POSITION AND OUTLOOK IN NOVEMBER, 1941

During the first nine months of the war, and prior to the inception of the Department, approximately 60,000 men had volunteered for service with the forces, and of these, some 29,000 had been actually posted to camp. Of the remainder, some 17,000 had been found to be medically unfit, and less than 3,000 had been held back from service in the public interest on account of the importance of their occupations. The rest awaited medical examination, hearing of appeals, or posting to camp.