

administration of the Act. In addition, the Unemployment Fund would have accumulated for at least six months before any calls were made thereon.

Unfortunately, at the time the Unemployment Act came into force the Dominion was on the eve of a grave financial depression. The reflex of world economic conditions brought continued decline in the prices of primary products, and in its train increasing numbers of unemployed.

The position was beyond the capacity of remedial measures formerly employed, and necessitated immediate action by the Board.

### **The Unemployment Board.**

Nominations were invited for the appointment of members to form the Unemployment Board (excepting Government nominees), and on the 20th November, 1930, the official appointments were notified in the *New Zealand Gazette*, the personnel of the Board being as follows:—

Hon. Mr. S. G. Smith, Minister of Labour (Chairman).

Mr. H. B. Burdekin, Government representative (Deputy Chairman).

Mr. George Finn, Government representative.

Mr. Patrick J. Small, representing primary industries.

Mr. Francis L. Hutchinson, representing secondary industries and employers.

Mr. Walter Bromley, representing organizations of workers.

Mr. Oscar McBrine, representing organizations of workers.

Mr. Walter E. Leadley, representing the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association, Inc.

The first meeting of the Board was held at Parliament Buildings, Wellington, on the 25th November, 1930, the Hon. Mr. S. G. Smith, Minister of Labour, presiding as Chairman.

At this date there were 7,402 men registered as unemployed, but indications that this number would increase considerably in the near future were not lacking. An intimation from the Government was received at this meeting to the effect that finances previously made available for unemployment relief by means of subsidies to local bodies were practically exhausted. The Board therefore was obliged to make immediate arrangements for the relief of the already considerable number of unemployed.

The question of administration and the placing of staff at the disposal of the Board required immediate decision. In this connection it was announced that the Government Statistician, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, had been appointed as the executive officer of the Board, with the title of Commissioner of Unemployment.

### **The Unemployment Fund.**

Under the provisions of the Unemployment Act a separate account was set up in the Public Account and designated "The Unemployment Fund." Its purpose was to make provision, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee previously mentioned, for financial resources to meet the requirements of an anticipated maximum of 15,000 unemployed men.

Moneys payable into the fund comprised—

- (a) The net proceeds of a levy of £1 10s. *per caput* on all males required to register under the Act (excluding those exempted from payment), after deduction of the cost of collection of the levy and other incidental expenditure:
- (b) A subsidy from the Consolidated Fund of an amount equal to one-half of the expenditure from the Unemployment Fund:
- (c) Any other moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the fund.
- (d) Other moneys lawfully payable into the fund, such as fines imposed for failure to carry out the provisions of the Act.

No moneys are payable out of the fund except by direction of the Minister of Finance, acting on the recommendation of the Unemployment Board. Expenditure cannot therefore be made by the Board except with the approval of the Minister of Finance, nor can the Minister approve any expenditure without the necessary recommendation from the Board.

### **Registration under the Act.**

Immediately the Act came into force the Post and Telegraph Department was authorized to compile a register of all males aged twenty years or over who were ordinarily resident in New Zealand. The Act provides penalties for non-registration, and from the numbers who have complied with requirements it is obvious that very few men have failed to register.

The actual number of men registered up to the 31st March, 1931, was 462,700. Since this number includes numerous persons exempted from payment of the levy, it is naturally considerably in excess of the numbers quoted as having paid instalments.

### **The Unemployment Levy.**

The unemployment levy of £1 10s. per annum was made payable in equal quarterly instalments, due on the 1st day of the months of March, June, September, and December, respectively, and a period of one month was allowed in which to effect payment of each instalment before penalties for non-payment were incurred. Collection of the levy from those liable for payment was also undertaken by the Post and Telegraph Department. Each contributor was required to make application for the issue of a book of coupons, the book containing eight coupons with counterfoils, representing