

*Causes of Recent Increase in Unemployment Registrations.*

The phenomenal increase in the number of registered unemployed since the Board commenced operations is well revealed by this table. Despite the progressive increases in the number of placements through the bureaux the registrations have increased from 7,402 on the 24th November, 1930, to 38,028 on the 30th March, 1931. This increase in the number of registered unemployed is by no means entirely due to a change in economic conditions generally since last November. Indeed, signs of at least partial recovery in the economic sphere are not lacking. In making comparisons of recent unemployed registrations with periods prior to the inception of the Board's activities the following facts should be borne in mind:—

- (1) The Board has made every effort to induce unemployed to register, for it realizes the absolute necessity of possessing complete and authoritative data as to the extent of unemployment before it can cope effectively with the situation. Wide publicity has been given to the Board's statement of its policy in this respect.
- (2) The coming into operation of the Board's schemes for the relief of unemployment has provided the unemployed worker with a definite incentive to register, since the Board has made it clear that all workers engaged under its schemes will be recruited from the ranks of the registered unemployed only.
- (3) Owing to the prevailing economic conditions, local bodies have been unable to provide employment to the same extent as previously, and so a considerable extra burden has been placed on the shoulders of the Board.
- (4) The very existence of the Board has caused a relaxing of the efforts of employers—both private and local bodies—to provide employment. Some employers who retained workers from motives of sympathy now have no compunction in making dismissals, since they know that some provision is being made for the workless.
- (5) The uncertainty of the immediate economic outlook, particularly in regard to wage-reductions, has meant that many employers are postponing all but absolutely urgent and immediately essential work, in the hope that they will be able to obtain cheaper labour in the near future. The number of registered unemployed thus is probably considerably larger than is strictly justified by the economic state of the country at the present time.
- (6) Many cases have come under the Board's notice where farmers and farmers' sons, superannuated workers, owners of small businesses, and men with considerable private means have been registering as unemployed in order to qualify for relief work; consequently the Board has been forced to take action to ensure that only genuinely unemployed wage-earners shall be registered and so qualify for employment under its schemes in the future.
- (7) Since the coming into operation of the Board's Scheme No. 5 on the 9th February the total of registered unemployed includes many thousands who are receiving partial employment under this scheme.

*Distribution of Unemployment Registrations.*

Table II of the Appendix shows the distribution of registered unemployed among the larger towns, week by week, during 1930 and 1931. Throughout 1930 a considerably larger number of registered unemployed has been recorded in Auckland City than in the other major centres of population. In Wellington and Christchurch the number of registered unemployed has been considerably less than in Auckland, while in Dunedin registrations have been on a much lower level, as regards numbers, than in any of the other three larger cities.

On the 30th March, 1931, the numbers of registered unemployed in the main centres were: Auckland, 8,545; Wellington, 4,642; Christchurch, 4,517; Dunedin, 2,569.

Among the smaller centres of population 1,111 unemployed were registered at Greymouth, 1,026 in Invercargill, 947 in Wanganui, and 851 in Palmerston North. There were 9,358 unemployed registered at various post-offices throughout the Dominion. Registered unemployed on the 30th March totalled 23,183 in the North Island and 14,845 in the South Island.

These figures represent 108 registered unemployed in the North Island and 118 in the South Island per 1,000 wage-earners in each Island as estimated for the 31st December, 1930.

*Analysis of Unemployment Registrations during 1930.*

An analysis of the unemployed registered at the end of the first week in each month of 1930 is given in Tables III – V of the Appendix. In Table V similar data for the years 1929 and 1931 are also given. These are now briefly summarized.