

During the year a special Executive Committee was appointed in Southland, following a visit to that province by members of the Board. This committee has functioned in a most efficient manner, keeping in touch with unemployment relief administration throughout the province, and assisting the Board to prosecute a vigorous policy of putting reproductive work in hand with relief labour.

The Board has developed this system of control on an extensive scale in Central Otago, where practically all unemployed are engaged under the subsidized gold-mining scheme. The results have been exceedingly satisfactory, and it is planned to apply it to other areas in conjunction with proposals for extensions of the gold-mining scheme. The arrangements operating in Central Otago make available an organization ideal for the Board's purposes. The Board is enabled to operate through a committee of a statutory body, and so satisfy audit requirements; it becomes linked with the local authority controlling roads and bridges; it secures the benefit of County Councillors' intimate personal knowledge of the area; it has the benefit of the services of county engineering and other staffs; and generally derives advantages from the arrangement which could not otherwise obtain even at considerable expense.

SCHEME No. 5.

Relief work provided on a rationed basis through the medium of Borough Councils, County Councils, and other employing authorities under Scheme No. 5 has been the main channel for the expenditure of unemployment funds throughout the period now under review.

In the introductory portion of the report the method of primary allocation of funds to centres is outlined. The secondary allocation is made at the local centres, at most of which the degree of need of each individual on its register is known personally to the certifying officer, but in any case is a matter of record. It is the duty of each certifying officer, acting usually in consultation with the Local Unemployment Committee, if such is operating in his centre, to weigh the claims of individuals, and, within the several classifications, to grant relief in the greatest measure to cases of greatest actual individual need. From time to time the eligibility of individual applicants for relief is reviewed in the light of possible changes in their family responsibilities or other relevant factors likely to affect their qualifications for relief. A factor to which special attention is paid is the efforts of the individual to supplement his measure of relief by every means in his power. It is required, for instance, that he must cultivate a vegetable garden either on his household property or on other land made available to him for this purpose.

Prior to the time when unemployment in New Zealand became a major problem it had been met by the institution by certain State Departments of special works, largely road making and improvement, with the aid of ordinary Government funds. These were known as "relief works," and regular wages paid in respect of them were necessarily lower than the ruling wages, and were called "relief wages." With the rapid accentuation of the problem a change occurred in the situation which is not generally appreciated. It no longer continued possible with the finances available, and the high number of registrations, to pay fixed and regular "wages" on works put in hand for relief purposes. The term "relief wage" became a misnomer. It is still frequently used; but the benefits available through the present machinery can, in fact, be only "scales of relief," awarded in terms of work, and varying in their availability according to the finances in hand, and the degree of individual need. Opportunity is taken to emphasize this distinction between past and present conditions.

Alterations in Scales of Relief.—In October, 1931, the rule covering the maximum amount of relief permissible to single men was altered to provide for special cases of distress where single men have indigent and aged parents or brothers and sisters under the age of sixteen years wholly dependent on them. Authority was given for the granting, in such cases, of relief on the same basis as to married men.

The following is the revised maximum scale of relief under Scheme 5, which has applied for each week in the four main centres since June, 1932, when as a result of the additional revenue obtained it became possible to make this increase in the scale.

Class.	Number of Days per Week.	Total Weekly Relief.
Single man	2	£ s. d. 0 15 0
Married man—		
Without children	2½	1 5 0
With one child under sixteen years	3	1 10 0
With two children under sixteen years	3½	1 15 0
With three or more children under sixteen years	4	2 0 0

As has been earlier mentioned, the Unemployment Board, almost simultaneously with the institution of these increased scales of relief, assumed responsibility for the issue of certain relief in the shape of food rations formerly granted by Hospital Boards. Some relief workers who had previously been in receipt also of the hospital relief were accordingly granted a measure of ration relief in addition to the increased relief work scale. The rations are procurable from tradespeople on presentation of official orders, which are issued only in specially deserving cases.

The position following the introduction of these alterations was watched closely by the Board, and it quickly became evident that it would be impossible to make them applicable over the whole Dominion. In order, however, to benefit relief workers in secondary centres and country districts during the winter months, arrangements were made to allocate sufficient moneys to implement the granting of the maximum amount of relief work permissible under the scale to all those whose circumstances were considered to warrant such treatment.