

### SMALL FARM PLAN.

The introduction in April, 1932, by the Right Hon. J. G. Coates, of legislation implementing the introduction of the Small Farm Plan, gave definite expression to the policy of, wherever possible, granting relief to unemployed in such a form as to serve the best interests of recipients and at the same time to put a period to the length of their dependence on relief.

This scheme, launched on 1st June, 1932, under the direction of the Department of Agriculture, provides for the settlement of unemployed and their families on small leased holdings of ten acres or more, in strategic positions where casual employment on surrounding farms may be secured.

The cost of establishment, including the erection of cottages, provision of necessary improvements and the transport of personal effects, is met out of a special vote, and is recoverable by way of amortized rent. Transport of the families to the location, and payment of sustenance allowance during the initial period of their occupation, are borne by the Unemployment Board.

Families are selected on considerations of suitability. The effect in practice is that families whom economic pressure has displaced from wage-earning occupations are provided with new niches as independent social units, with a permanent home, and the means of themselves producing their main necessities of life, in an environment favourable to their augmenting the latter with earnings in cash or goods in kind.

In addition to the settlement of small areas, the scheme has allowed of a variation to enable land owners to establish share-milkers on their properties under definite contracts with the Crown. Under this division, cottages and sheds are erected by the Crown, conditional upon the employment of an unemployed worker with a family.

Settlements effected, or under consideration, are as follows :—

Small farm leases	..	..	..	..	..	418
Share-milking proposals	..	..	..	..	..	266
						<hr/> 684
<i>Total Capital Liability involved (approximate)—</i>						£
Small farms	..	..	..	..	..	109,000
Share-milking proposals	..	..	..	..	..	67,000
						<hr/> £176,000
						£
Capital cost per family (approximate)	..	..	..	..	..	260
Average annual rental of small farms	..	..	..	..	..	9

The results of the Small Farm Plan in operation have demonstrated its suitability for considerable expansion ; and legislation to permit this is at present before Parliament.

### UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS.

Although the Board's statutory functions are principally concerned with the relief of unemployment among adults over the age of twenty years, unemployment amongst youths, due to contraction of normal employment channels, is a matter which has naturally given the Board concern, and in which it has facilitated by way of special grants, as funds permitted, the activities of voluntary organizations in this field.

One thousand eight hundred youths have also been absorbed under the Board's Scheme 4A with subsidies from the relief funds ; and a small special scheme (No. 7) of an experimental nature is conducted by the Board under which youths contract to remain one year on sheep-stations, the owners of which agree to furnish the boys with opportunity for obtaining a general knowledge of farm work. The lads are required to conform to the discipline of the stations, but are not treated as ordinary farm hands. An essential condition of the plan is that no normal labour on the stations may be displaced to secure the services of boys. A small weekly cash payment is made by the Board to the youths.

The Board has authorized the payment of £25 each in respect of New Zealand soldiers' sons admitted up to the end of March, 1933, to Flock House, a farm-training institution originally established some years ago by New Zealand sheepowners in acknowledgment of their debt to British seamen in respect of the war period 1914-18.

During 1932 a comprehensive review of the unemployment situation as it affects youths was conducted by Messrs. A. E. Ansell, M.P., and S. G. Smith, M.P., whose report to the Government contained valuable information and recommendations.

### EMPLOYMENT OF RELIEF LABOUR ON AFFORESTATION.

Afforestation, by reason of the reproductive nature of the work and the fact that its period of greatest activity (the planting season) falls in mid-winter, is generally recognized as an eminently suitable avenue for the absorption of relief labour. The Board has therefore been glad to co-operate with the State Forest Service in the employment of considerable numbers of unemployed on tree-planting. This co-operation has been of mutual advantage, as the contraction of the State Forest Service vote, in general with those of other Departments, created a difficulty in the disposal of large numbers of nursery stocks which had been grown for planting purposes.

It is hoped to extend the association between the Board and the State Forest Service during the next planting-season if the need for relief activities remains unabated.