

### UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Although the unemployment funds were directed in the first place towards the relief of unemployed male wage-earners, it soon became apparent that distress due to unemployment was being experienced, mainly in the four chief cities, among women and girls. Determination of methods to assist in the case of female unemployed was hampered by the restricted avenues of suitable employment into which they might be absorbed with assistance from the Unemployment Fund. Outside of private domestic service, it is found practically impossible to subsidize female employment without in some way prejudicing normal employment. As the position called for immediate action, however, the Board appointed an Advisory Committee to consider and report on female unemployment in the Dominion.

Acting on the recommendations of this committee, the Board set up Women's Unemployment Committees in the four chief centres, and later in some of the smaller centres, to act, with financial assistance from the Unemployment Fund, in relieving distress among the female unemployed. Financial aid has been provided by way of grants from time to time to these responsible Women's Committees for the provision of suitable registration facilities, and for assistance in affording relief and fostering employment.

There have been established in the four centres by the Women's Committees training centres for instruction, under competent supervision, in cooking, sewing, and other domestic subjects. Some free meals and clothing are provided, and a small weekly sum paid for work performed in making up clothes, cooking meals, and for general domestic work. In addition, women and girls who have no homes and are without means to provide themselves with accommodation are granted quarters in various unofficial female-welfare institutions at the expense of the Unemployment Fund.

As the women and girls for whom other work cannot be found become proficient in domestic work, an endeavour is made to place them in private domestic service. If necessary, the wages offered by the prospective employer are subsidized from the funds provided by the Board.

### CONCLUSION.

#### Administration.

Despite the magnitude of the Board's operations the administration expenses in this connection have been kept at a very low figure. Fears have been expressed from time to time in certain quarters that the amount expended from the Unemployment Fund on administration is unduly high. Examination of the position shows the contrary to be the case.

In the financial year 1931-32, of payments from the Unemployment Fund totalling £2,254,257 a sum of £37,347, or only 1·66 per cent. of the total, was paid in respect to administration expenses.

This percentage is based on cash payments. If it is desired to view the most conservative picture, the costs can be extracted on an expenditure basis. Such a basis would include cash payments for the year, together with amounts due and unpaid at the end of the year. Included also would be a sum of £4,000, representing the cost of collection of unemployment levy by the Post and Telegraph Department. In terms of the Unemployment Act, 1930, this sum is deducted by that Department before paying the collected levies into the Unemployment Fund. Taking the figures even on this basis, the percentage of administrative cost to total expenditure remains remarkably low, as the following figures will show:—

(1) Total expenditure, 1931-32 (including amounts due and unpaid at end of year)	£
.. .. .	2,269,476
Plus cost of collection of levy retained by Post Office	4,000
Total cost	<u>£2,273,476</u>
£	
(2) Amount of administration expenses included in total cost shown above	55,061
(3) Administration expenses as percentage of total cost	2·42 per cent.

The low figure of the Board's administration costs can be attributed in the main to the fact that, as a matter of policy, the Board's operations have been carried out by means of existing State and local-body machinery and other organizations where these were suitable. Thus the taxation revenue is collected by the Post Office and the Land and Income Tax Department; the main relief works are carried out through local bodies and State Departments; and in each of about 350 centres throughout the country the Board has a representative, known as a Certifying Officer. Except in the seventeen centres where there is a branch of the Labour Department, and in a few other exceptions, the duties of certifying officers are conducted by Postmasters in conjunction with their usual duties. These officers, with the assistance of their staffs, attend to the many details connected with the registration and placement of men, the payment of subsidies to local bodies and individuals, and the control of the allocation of funds made to the centres by the Board. In addition, there are at the majority of centres Local Unemployment Committees, who act in an honorary advisory capacity in association with the certifying officers. The Board thus has contact with the situation throughout the Dominion, without the necessity and expense of building a special organization.