

Enlistment for the forces was for some time on a voluntary basis. To ensure that industrially valuable men were not accepted for service Army Area Officers at first furnished details of fit volunteers to Placement Officers of the Labour Department, and recommendations for postponement of service were made to the Director of the Registration Branch of the Social Security Department. (This Branch had been set up in October, 1939, to compile a register giving up-to-date information regarding the industrial, economic, and sociological condition of the population.)

As the volume of work increased, sixteen independent District Advisory Man-power Committees with local knowledge were appointed to safeguard the continuity of essential industrial activities through the postponement of military service in individual cases where considered advisable. These bodies were advisory and without statutory authority.

In the early part of 1940 the probable necessity to resort to compulsion in regard to military service became evident, and the powers necessary to impose compulsory service were taken in the National Service Emergency Regulations, gazetted on 18th June, 1940. It was this necessity to use compulsion in the organization of military service which first brought the National Service Department as such into existence.

Immediately following the gazettement of these regulations the Department was constituted under a Minister and a Director of National Service. The Head Office was evolved from the erstwhile Registration Branch of the Social Security Department, which now became the Man-power Division, while the former Employment Division of the Department of Labour was also incorporated in the new Department and redesignated the Employment and Rehabilitation Division.

No new district organizations were set up at that time to supplant the Placement Officers already attached to the Employment Division.

A central advisory council, known as the Central Advisory Labour Council, was brought into existence to co-ordinate the man-power aspects of the work of three wartime organizations—viz., the Primary Production Council, the Industrial Emergency Council, and the Factory Advisory Committee. The secretarial and executive work of this body was done by this Department. It continued to function until May, 1941, when its work was found to be better delegated to the various committees of the War Council.

3. REGISTRATIONS FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

A pre-requisite to the selection of individuals for national service and the subsequent enforcement of compulsory service on the part of those selected was the existence of a complete register of all the eligible individuals from whom to make the selection.

Of the many possible orders of priority in which the population of military age might have been called for military service it had been decided that—

- (i) Single men should be called before married men; and
- (ii) The selection of men for service should be decided by lot.

The ages looked upon at the time as suitable for military purposes were nineteen to forty-five inclusive as regards home service, and twenty-one to forty inclusive as regards overseas service.

The population as a whole was therefore divided for the purpose in hand into sections as follows:—

- (a) All resident persons aged sixteen and upwards were regarded as forming one class, and designated the General Reserve:
- (b) This reserve was thereupon divided into three parts, as follows—
 - (i) Unmarried men aged nineteen to forty-five inclusive. This class was designated the First Division of the General Reserve.
 - (ii) Married men (including those with children) aged nineteen to forty-five inclusive. This class was designated the Second Division of the General Reserve.
 - (iii) The remaining sections of the General Reserve. This class was designated the Third Division of the General Reserve.

Maoris, aliens, naturalized British subjects, members of overseas forces, and men discharged from overseas service as medically unfit were excluded from the First and Second Divisions of the General Reserve. (Naturalized British subjects were later included.)

For the purpose of defining marital status, marriages entered into on or after 1st May, 1940, were not recognized until the birth of a child of the marriage.

The compilation of a register of the First Division—i.e. single men aged nineteen to forty-five inclusive—was put in hand immediately after the inception of the Department. In August, 1940, the enrolment of all men in this division was directed by Proclamation. The urgency of the position necessitated the use of the already existing social security registration forms as the basis of the register, a course which involved the abandoning of the Social Security Register. These forms were, however, far from complete as a basis, having been furnished in the first place in conjunction with declarations of income other than salary or wages. There were many cases of failure to complete these declarations arising especially from the large class of workers who have no income other than salary or wages. A special registration form was therefore provided at all post-offices, and wide publicity was used to secure compliance with the terms of the Proclamation on the part of those affected. A number of prosecutions for failure to register finally had to be resorted to.

In May, 1941, following a War Cabinet decision to utilize eighteen-year-old youths in the Territorial Force, a second Proclamation was issued calling on all youths in this age-class to register.

With the progressive exhaustion of the resources of single men, the need to form a register of the Second Division (married men) became evident.

Although married men were already included in the Social Security Register, this register was by now considered even more unsatisfactory as a basis than it had been for the purpose of calling single men. The forms themselves had not been drawn up with this end in view, the information was now out of date, the definition of "children" was not the same in relation to military service as was specified