

363. The entry of aliens or of non-European British subjects is still a matter for the Customs Department, and when such persons have applied for permission to settle here the Department has given advice from the employment point of view when such advice has been requested by the Comptroller of Customs.

PART IV.—EMPLOYMENT LEVELS

SECTION I.—EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN RETROSPECT

(i) Data available on Past Trends and Experiences

364. The year under review has seen the threshold of post-war employment policy crossed. A new approach to employment problems has been established, founded on the study of factual data to an extent not hitherto tackled. Data on employment levels and trends has until the present been deficient. Nevertheless, it is most desirable in crossing the threshold into full-employment policy to construct as coherent a picture as is possible from the scanty data available of the employment trends and experiences of the past, since these experiences throw up the problems which the current and future activities of the National Employment Service will be mainly concentrated on. It is necessary to establish the nature and characteristics of these problems as accurately as is possible if full value is to be derived from the subsequent parts of this report and from succeeding reports of the National Employment Service.

365. Information about the levels of employment or unemployment is particularly deficient in New Zealand for the years prior to 1930. Since 1867 the census returns have provided figures on the occupational distribution of the population, and from 1896 onwards information on unemployment has been included. These five-yearly census returns provide the only complete coverage of data in all fields of employment. The following table shows the main features reflected in census returns :—

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1874	..	..	..	300,000	111,000	Not shown	15,000	Not shown
1881	..	..	..	490,000	167,000	Not shown	25,700	Not shown
1891	..	..	..	626,000	207,000	Not shown	45,400	Not shown
1896	..	..	..	703,000	235,000	14,700	50,600	2,630
1901	..	..	..	772,000	274,000	8,400	63,000	1,360
1906	..	..	..	888,000	323,000	8,180	72,000	1,370
1911	..	..	..	1,008,000	363,000	7,150	87,600	1,200
1916	..	..	..	1,099,000	355,000	5,900	97,600	1,150
1921	..	..	..	1,218,000	401,000	11,060	107,600	2,150
1926	..	..	..	1,344,000	438,000	10,690	113,300	2,430
1936	..	..	..	1,491,000	505,000	35,770	138,900	1,860

The population figures are taken from Volume I of the Census Reports, 1936, and those on unemployment from Volume XI. All tables are exclusive of Maoris, though prior to 1926 Maori half-castes living as Europeans were included in the population totals.

366. From 1918 onwards information regarding the numbers of people employed in manufacturing industries has been available in the annual Reports on Factory Production. Apart from inference from these reports, the only sources of information regarding employment and unemployment prior to 1930 are the records of unplaced applicants registered at Labour Department Bureaux available from 1892 onwards, and the percentages of trade-unionists unemployed, available from 1925 onwards. From October, 1930, unemployment figures are available at frequent intervals, though changes in administrative procedure make any comparisons between periods somewhat difficult. The coming into force of the Social Security Act in April, 1939, introduced a change in the definition of unemployment and again made comparisons with previous figures difficult.