

benefit and the right to vote. The cost of collection would be very small. This could be done by having special 1s. stamps procurable at any post-office, and these would be affixed to a card or folder, which would also be procurable at the post-office. The fund would be administered by the proposed Employment and Primary Production Board, and it would be the duty of this Board to keep in employment every one wanting work. Those looking for work would, of course, have to accept the employment offered until they could find work to suit them. The majority of work would be in the country districts, and I propose that there should be a number of farm service stations at distances of, say, thirty miles apart. These stations would be in charge of skilled agriculturists, and would, of course, be properly equipped with all modern plant and conveniences. Accommodation would be provided for thirty or more men, who would be employed on the farm or adjoining farms, wherever work was offering. They would be paid regulation wages for the time worked, and the amount of work per week would be regulated by the number to be provided for, but each man would be guaranteed at least, say, twenty-two hours per week. If conditions were at all normal full time would be possible.

These farm service stations would not only be the means of providing a sort of clearing-house or distributing-centre for labour, but the activities of the station would be educative, and would have a very far-reaching effect for good throughout the country. The advantage to the worker would be that instead of wear-and-tear and waste of time in tramping the country looking for work, and missing it every day, they would know exactly where to go, the class of work awaiting them, and the exact conditions of employment. At present many men are lost to the land owing to their being unable to get a sound training in farm-work, and the country is so much the poorer on that account. To the farmer these service depots would come as "a boon and a blessing to men." Labour is one of the most difficult problems on many farms, but particularly so with the small dairy-farmer, who is often handicapped in getting the best returns from his land through lack of experience, want of horses or implements, or inability to procure labour during temporary ill health, &c. Many a man has been broken down in health and ruined through the latter cause. To be relieved of this anxiety would, I believe, change the whole outlook in regard to the farmer; in fact, the farm service depot would, in my opinion, lessen the cost of labour to the farmer, and add so much to the attractiveness of the farms that the drifting to the towns, which has caused so much anxiety for a number of years, would be entirely checked.

I would like to make special reference to items Nos. 21 and 22 on statements attached. Each depot should be under an obligation to arrange for the planting within its radius of a certain number of trees every winter. The planting of these trees would not only improve the landscape, but the benefit derived from them, and later on the profit would, I am sure, make good any loss which might be made in the working of the depot. If it did not, the next item, No. 22, certainly would do so.

It is well known that many farms are too large for the present occupier to work to present advantage, and consequently the farmer is handicapped by having more land to look after than he can properly manage. Consequently the land is to a certain extent neglected, and the possible revenue from it is not obtained. In many cases these farms, even if it were possible to find a buyer for the excess area, are not suitable for subdivision. It would be possible, however, for the farm service depot to work this land on its own account, or on behalf of the occupier; it would, in fact, be one of the principal duties of the overseer of the farm service station to see that, as far as his powers would allow, the best possible use is made of land within his area. It would be difficult to estimate the value of the increased production if all the land were cultivated and grazed to its full extent, instead of only about 60 to 70 per cent., as at present. I might remark that in assessing this at only 60 to 70 per cent. I have had no definite data to go upon. It is merely a guess, but I think it is not very far out.

Employment and Primary Production Board—It would be the duty of this Board to administer the Employment Assurance Fund, the farm service depot, and to promote and encourage the increase of production in all primary industries.

One of the chief reasons for unemployment at certain periods is the lack of co-ordination between the Public Works Department and large public bodies with regard to the employment of labour. Extensive works are commenced and timed to finish without proper regard to the consequences resulting from a large number of men being withdrawn from or being released upon the labour-market. Having a properly constituted Board with a fund at its disposal of at least half a million pounds per annum, New Zealand should not hesitate to undertake the responsibility of providing work at a respectable living-wage for all who require it.

TABLE I.—EMPLOYMENT ASSURANCE FUND.

Administration: Employment and Production Board. Contributors: All persons of sixteen years and over—workers and non-workers. Period: Say, forty years. Amount of contribution: 1s. per month. Method of payment: Post-office 1s. stamps. Penalty for non-payment: Loss of vote. Benefits: Employment guaranteed according to number of workers to be provided for. Possible Benevolent Fund and superannuation. No man should be compelled to contribute towards unemployment. All should contribute towards providing employment, for all benefit.

TABLE II.—FARM SERVICE DEPOT.

Value of farm, 200 acres and buildings, £7,000; stock, £1,500; plant, £1,500: total, £10,000.

Dr.				£	Cr.				£
Rent of farm	..	..	..	900	Proceeds of farm produce	..	..	1,000	
Overseer	..	..	..	600	Proceeds of labour and services supplied	..	..	7,500	
Thirty men	..	..	..	6,000					
Benzine and sundries	..	..	..	1,000					
				<u>£8,500</u>					<u>£8,500</u>

Operations to cover fifteen-mile radius. Branch camps.