

PERSONNEL OF BOARD.

Since the presentation of the Unemployment Board's last preceding annual report, the Hon. Sir Alexander Young, Minister of Health, who had temporarily held the position of Chairman for some eight months, was obliged to relinquish that office because of the effect of particularly onerous duties upon his health. The Hon. S. G. Smith became charged with the administration of the Unemployment Act, 1930, as from 1st April, 1935, and thus automatically assumed the chairmanship of the Board.

The Hon. Mr. Smith, who was Chairman of the original Board in 1930–31 and also of the Board as at present constituted until September, 1931, resumed duty as Chairman and presided at his first meeting of the Board on 2nd April, 1935.

On 31st May, 1935, Mr. G. C. Godfrey relinquished the office of Commissioner of Unemployment, this position being filled as from 1st June, 1935, by the appointment of Mr. J. S. Hunter, formerly Commissioner of Transport. The Board placed on record its appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. Godfrey during his term of office.

The remaining members of the Board, Messrs. Walter Bromley (Deputy-Chairman), G. A. Pascoe, and P. R. Climie completed the statutory period of their membership on 31st July, 1935, and were reappointed by the Governor-General for a further term of two years.

AMENDMENTS TO UNEMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION.

During the 1934 session of Parliament an Unemployment Amendment Act was passed, and became law on the 7th November, 1934. This Amendment Act provided for certain changes in the incidence of the emergency unemployment charge, and also included various machinery enactments to facilitate the administration of the principal Act. The most important amendments affecting the emergency unemployment charge are briefly as follows:—

Total exemption from payment of the emergency charge on salary or wages (commonly referred to as the "wages-tax") is provided for all persons aged sixteen years and under twenty years.

A further amendment to section 12 of the Unemployment Amendment Act, 1931, as amended by section 9 of the Unemployment Amendment Act, 1932, which dealt generally with the incidence of the wages-tax, clarifies the position regarding exemption of certain classes of relief workers from payment of the wages-tax where they are employed by Departments of State, local authorities, or public bodies pursuant to a scheme whereby the whole amount of their wages is refunded to the employer from the Unemployment Fund. Power is also given the Board to extend this exemption to certain relief workers employed under the same conditions where only a portion of their wages may be refunded from the Unemployment Fund.

Exemption from the emergency unemployment charge on income other than salary or wages is provided in the case of women aged sixty years and over and in the case of men aged sixty-five years and over whose income does not exceed £104 per annum. Exemption is also provided in the case of persons unable, through permanent physical or mental disability, to follow any regular employment, with a similar proviso regarding their total income. These two classes of exemptions became operative from and including the instalment of the charge due on 1st February, 1935.

Under this Amendment Act the Board is given power to make an assessment of a person's income and of the charge payable on such income in cases of default in furnishing the necessary declaration.

Provision is made for exemption from the emergency unemployment charge on "other income" in the case of all women who are liable to pay this charge to the extent of the first £50 of such income. Previously the amount of exemption was only £20. Native women who were not liable for payment of the charge on other income prior to the passing of this Amendment Act have now the same liability as other women.

Exemption is also provided for women under the age of twenty years and women in receipt of certain pensions. Males in a similar position have always been exempt from the charge on "other income" by reason of their exemption from payment of the general unemployment levy so that this amendment corrects an obvious anomaly.

Male Natives aged twenty years or over are also brought within the provisions of the Act in regard to liability for the charge on "other income." They were previously exempt by reason of their total exemption from payment of the general unemployment levy unless they had secured the Unemployment Board's permission to become contributors.

Other sections of the Unemployment Amendment Act, 1934, deal with matters of a general nature.

Section 7 repeals a previous enactment (which fixed Board members' salaries at a specified figure) and makes provision for the remuneration of members (other than the Minister and the Commissioner) to be appropriated from time to time by Parliament.

Section 9 removes certain restrictions imposed in the principal Act regarding the conditions under which sustenance is payable.