

NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED.

Commencing with the date of presentation of this report, the Unemployment Board proposes to present its periodical returns, showing the numbers of unemployed, on a different basis.

In the past it has been the practice to treat as "unemployed" not only those men who are receiving part-time relief work or sustenance, but also those men engaged upon full-time work (much of which is in normal industrial undertakings) because of the fact that the earnings of such men were found in whole or in part from the Unemployment Fund. The inclusion of the latter class of men in unemployment figures can be defended on the grounds that a considerable proportion of the expenditure from the fund is absorbed in subsidizing such full-time employment. On the other hand, the imagination has to be severely stretched to classify such men as genuinely unemployed wage-earners. Many of them would, under normal conditions, be employed by the Public Works Department, State Forest Service, and other employing authorities from funds found wholly by the General Government from the Consolidated Fund, or possibly from loan-moneys, and from local-body revenue or loan-moneys. The economic depression of the last few years resulted in an almost complete cessation of public works (both general and local), and as full-time employment at standard rates of pay, or even full-time employment at less than standard rates, where the recipient is engaged on some class of work that is creating assets either for himself (as in the case of gold-prospecting) or for the community in general (as in the case of land-development) is much preferable than rationed relief work, the Board has been fully justified in encouraging full-time work of this nature. The figures quoted in this report, and in the Appendix thereto, show that the number in full-time subsidized employment during the last twelve months has varied from 16,000 to as high as 24,000.

The tables published in the Appendix to this report have been compiled upon the same lines as last year, mainly for comparative purposes, but the Board desires to draw attention to the fact that the true unemployment position is more properly depicted by a number of unemployed representing men in receipt of part-time relief work, or on sustenance, approximating 38,000. This is the number recorded at the beginning of August, 1934, and also in July, 1935, although a considerable decrease was recorded during the summer months when the figure dropped below 32,000 in February, 1935. By this time it has become fixed in the minds of the general public that New Zealand has between 50,000 and 60,000 "unemployed," whereas the true figure, excluding those full-time workers referred to above, should be between 30,000 and 40,000. In the past, also, it has been the practice to refer to the numbers of "registered unemployed." This term, while no doubt of certain value for statistical purposes, is really a misnomer in that nearly 8,000 men at present registered as unemployed, and in receipt of some form of unemployment relief, are really engaged full-time at standard rates of pay with various local bodies, prospecting and mining for gold as a full-time occupation, &c. Such men are retained on the register simply for purposes of convenience in effecting payment of subsidy, but there is no real difference between the conditions of their employment and those of full-time subsidized workers placed with the Public Works Department or under the farm-subsidy schemes, &c., where the workers are taken off the register.

There are really four definite classes of men who are wholly, or partly, a charge upon the Unemployment Fund, and these classes are set out below:—

- (1) *Relief under Scheme 5 on a rationed basis* includes—
 - (a) All Scheme 5 workers receiving ordinary ration of relief.
 - (b) Scheme 5 workers on rationed basis where daily rate supplemented by employing authority or extra work provided, but not up to full-time work.
 - (c) Aerodrome-workers employed for rationed periods but on task work based on special rates.
 - (d) Any other variation of Scheme 5 where men working less than five days per week.
- (2) *Sustenance* includes all men on "permanent" sustenance without work.
- (3) *Full-time Employment at Relief Rates* includes—
 - (a) Schemes 4A, 4C, 7, 11, farm camp and small farm sustenance recipients.
 - (b) Scheme 6A camps (Public Works—single men).
 - (c) Scheme 6B camps (local bodies, &c.—single men).
 - (d) Scheme 6C, camp-workers on land-development work undertaken by Public Works Department, local bodies, &c., also State Forest tree planting.
 - (e) Scheme 5 (subsidized gold-prospectors).
 - (f) Scheme 8A (subsidized gold-prospectors).
 - (g) Scheme 5, workers under special arrangements (such as preparatory work connected with gold-mining activities, restoration of flood damage, &c., where men employed at least five days per week, but receiving less than existing Public Works standard rates).
 - (h) Special subsidized workers, such as those employed in Defence Department activities in certain Territorial camps.
 - (i) Intermittent workers.
- (4) *Full-time Employment at Standard or Award Rates* includes—
 - (a) Scheme 10 workers (building subsidy on wages basis).
 - (b) Road metalling and land-development subsidized workers under control of Public Works Department and a few local bodies.
 - (c) Gold-mining supervisors, special prospecting parties, and Scheme 8B employees.
 - (d) Scheme 4B and similar farm contract workers.
 - (e) Men on full-time employment at standard rates of pay provided by local employing authorities, &c., with a subsidy from the Unemployment Fund.
 - (f) Men employed on miscellaneous special jobs—e.g., Humphrey's water-race construction, Hobsonville air-base development, Napier Harbour reclamation, &c., where full labour cost is met from the Unemployment Fund.