

The situation was most acute in Auckland and Wellington, the two largest centres of population, and the Board found it necessary to make provision for sustenance upon a more or less permanent basis.

At the beginning of August, 1934, the Board gave lengthy consideration to the general question of sustenance, as a result of which it was decided that the time had arrived for the application of the principle upon a revised and more permanent basis. This decision was impelled by increasing difficulties in the larger centres of population where the provision of suitable and useful work under Scheme No. 5 was becoming a real problem.

A new scale of sustenance payments ranging from 10s. per week to £1 16s. per week in the four main centres, and from 7s. 6d. per week to £1 10s. per week in secondary centres was instituted as a trial for a period of three months, and it was stated as a matter of policy that no worker placed on sustenance should receive more as a sustenance payment than he would ordinarily be eligible for as a relief worker.

With the general revision of relief rates in January, 1935, the scale of sustenance payments was increased all round; also, provision was made for a third division applicable to smaller centres where the introduction of sustenance was considered desirable. A further general increase in sustenance payments took effect from 1st July, 1935, when the Board announced a bonus of 2s. per week for single men and 3s. per week for married men to relieve distress during the winter.

The weekly sustenance rates payable at the present time are as follows:—

Classification.	Four Main Urban Areas.	Secondary Cities and Towns.	Smaller Centres.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Single man	0 14 0	0 12 0	0 9 6
Married man with wife only	1 4 0	1 1 0	0 18 0
Married man with wife and one child	1 8 0	1 5 0	1 2 0
Married man with wife and two children	1 12 0	1 9 0	1 6 0
Married man with wife and three children	1 16 0	1 13 0	1 10 0
Married man with wife and four children	1 18 0	1 15 0	1 12 0
Married man with wife and five children	2 0 0	1 17 0	1 14 0
Married man with wife and six children	2 2 0	1 19 0	1 16 0
Married man with wife and seven or more children	2 4 0	2 1 0	1 18 0

Sustenance according to the above scale is now being paid in nine secondary cities and towns and in approximately twenty-five smaller centres. During the last twelve months the number of men on sustenance has increased from 4,974 to 12,842, representing an increase from 13 per cent. of the total receiving part-time relief in August, 1934, to 34 per cent. of the total in July, 1935. The numbers of men on sustenance at four-weekly intervals from August, 1934, to date, will be found in Table IV of the Appendix.

An increase of 158 per cent. in the numbers receiving sustenance during the twelve months under review requires some explanation. This increase is, of course, balanced by a corresponding decrease in the numbers on part-time relief work under Scheme No. 5. A large proportion of those now on sustenance are men who, by reason of age or physical disability, are really unfitted for manual labour. Most of these have no doubt been glad of the opportunity to receive sustenance without work. In fact, the Board has on record many applications from relief workers for sustenance payments in preference to continued employment under Scheme No. 5.

On the other hand the Board has been forced to introduce sustenance in some centres as an alternative to permitting local bodies to perpetuate a system of "relief" employment on ordinary maintenance-work which rightly should be done wholly out of local-body funds. All indications point to a further increase in numbers of men on sustenance. Many local employing authorities, with no further suitable "relief" works in view, are submitting proposals for full-time standard works on which to absorb a proportion of their local unemployed. Scheme No. 5 (rationed relief work) is gradually dying out, and those men who cannot be placed on standard works must perforce go on to sustenance until they can be absorbed into other and normal channels of employment.

Sustenance men are required to report in person once each week to make formal application, and again later in the week to uplift their pay. This is a necessary safeguard to ensure that men in ordinary employment do not attempt to draw sustenance pay. Each man is required to furnish a weekly statement of his income (if any) from sources other than unemployment relief, and such income is assessed in determining his eligibility for sustenance according to the Board's rules governing the relationship of private earnings or income to relief payments, as described on page 16.

The Board is watching closely the effect, in certain centres, of the withdrawal of relief labour from works not approved under the rules governing Scheme No. 5. The consequent placement of men on sustenance should result in the creation of more casual employment on the part of local employing authorities, and results in this direction are awaited with interest.