

increasing the number, even with the introduction of much more plant than is now in use. The existing practice of men for public works being sent direct to the Public Works Department by unemployment bureaux in the different centres, and without any regard whatever to their fitness for their work or their capabilities, will cease; in fact, a reclassification on the existing jobs must be done. The qualification for employment under the Public Works Department will be the ability of the man to do the job, and unless an applicant can measure up in this regard he will not be employed. Service will be demanded, and there will be no room for the man who cannot do the job and who would be a burden on his mates. The Public Works Department is not the place for the man who, by reason of his physique, is more capable of the lighter types of employment, and it will be our job to see that men are sorted out according to their ability to do the work for which they are best fitted.

WORKERS' AGREEMENT.

I have concluded an agreement with the New Zealand Workers' Union which will cover all employees of the Department. Under the new agreement a five-day week of forty hours is introduced on the public works of New Zealand, and it will consist of eight hours, to be worked on each day from Monday to Friday, inclusive. Workmen will have Saturday free unless they elect to work on Saturday morning to make up time which has been lost earlier in the week owing to wet weather.

ALL WORKS TO BE STANDARD WORKS.

Practically all of the works which have been carried out by the Department for several years have been classified as relief works, and the basic rates of pay have been 12s. per day for married and 9s. for single men. Under the new agreement all works will in future be classed as standard works, and the basic rate of pay for labourers will be 16s. per day, and single men will receive the same rate of pay as married men. Similar increases are being granted to other classes of employees covered by the agreement. No distinction will be made between Natives and Europeans.

CO-OPERATIVE CONTRACT SYSTEM TO BE ADOPTED.

The present system of co-operative contracts is to be adopted as a principle. I am a believer in the co-operative contract system, which has been in operation on public works for over forty years. It encourages men to give of their best, as they are paid by results and know that they will be paid what they earn. The prices allowed for the different classes of material and work will be sufficient to enable men of average ability, working industriously, to earn the daily rates of wages provided for in the agreement, and although the average earnings may not exceed standard wages it is expected that good men will earn more than wages. Workmen will be allowed to select their workmates. They will also be allowed to appoint their headman, subject to confirmation by the Engineer. This provision is necessary to ensure that the best men available are placed in charge of parties.

TWO PAYS PER MONTH.

Two pays will be made each month instead of the old system of monthly pays, which was unsatisfactory, especially for married men who accepted country work and had to leave their families at home.

HOLIDAY PRIVILEGES.

In the past workmen on what are known as full-time relief of unemployment works have not been paid for statutory holidays or for any annual leave. As mentioned earlier, all works will in future be classed as standard works and all