

No time was lost in correcting these weaknesses. Standard rates were arranged for all work performed, and Scheme 5 was limited to approved works that promised some value in return for effort expended.

In spite of the improvements made in Scheme 5 administration it seems desirable that if relief work must be intermittent—that is to say, if the worker cannot be engaged for the whole length of the job because there are more men than jobs—it is more advantageous to employ the men full time for short periods than it is to employ them for broken periods of a week. It would be possible in this way to avoid the worst features of unemployment; to the extent that local authorities are able to assist, this policy is being carried out.

The industrial history of the country, and of many countries, shows that there is always a proportion of working-people who must rely for a livelihood on part-time employment. This is particularly pronounced in such industries as building, engineering, and coal-mining.

Intermittent employment, however, when organized by largely providing the finance from the Employment Promotion Fund, is not without weakness, whether it is organized on the basis of full time for given periods or for a given number of days in every week. Experience goes to show that the greatest weakness arising from this is the tendency of the worker to organize his living standard to suit the restricted income and to be content with that work provided near his home rather than accept employment farther afield involving the inconveniences of travelling and living away from home, and this problem is still engaging the attention of the Minister and of the Department.

The present nature of the scheme differs greatly from that previously in operation. It is intermittent employment, and in only that respect is it the same as the Scheme No. 5 as originally known. The employment is carried out at award wages, the weekly amount has been increased, and in a number of cases the local authorities employing the men are supplementing the wages over the maximum allowed from the Employment Promotion Fund. Many of the men are earning on relief, plus supplementary earnings paid by the local authority, or other private earnings, up to the basic wage. It is true that this employment is wholly dependent upon the bulk of the wages being paid from the Employment Fund, and that in the absence of such an arrangement they would be included in the sustenance figures, but, from the worker's point of view, he is, in the majority of cases, at least in no worse position than the casual labourer in industry subject to loss of wages for wet weather and other stoppages over which he has no control.

The conditions of employment under Scheme No. 5 are as follows :—

Intermittent work relief is provided on a basis ranging from 21s. per week for 9½ hours' work in the case of a single man to 66s. 6d. per week for 29½ hours in the case of a married man with seven or more children.

The works undertaken as Scheme No. 5 relief are regarded as standard works under ordinary industrial conditions. The work is accordingly required to be performed in full on the basis of 2s. 3d. per hour; where the award rate is more than 2s. 3d. per hour, then the award rate must be paid and the hours to be worked will be reduced in consequence.

The following table shows the present rates of Scheme No. 5 relief and the additional assistance which the Department encourages the local bodies to provide :—

Classification.	Amount of Scheme No. 5 Relief, and Number of Hours.		Additional Minimum Amount, and Hours which Local Bodies are encouraged to Provide.		Total.	
	Rate.	Hours.	Rate.	Hours.	Rate.	Hours.
	s. d.		s. d.		s. d.	
Class A—Single men	21 0	9½	6 0	2½	27 0	12
Class B—Married men with wife only	38 6	17½	6 6	2½	45 0	20
Class C—Married, with wife and one child	42 6	18½	2 6	1½	45 0	20
Class D—Married, with wife and two children	46 6	20½	7 6	3½	54 0	24
Class E—Married, with wife and three children	50 6	22½	3 6	1½	54 0	24
Class F—Married, with wife and four children	54 6	24½	8 6	3½	63 0	28
Class G—Married, with wife and five children	58 6	26	4 6	2	63 0	28
Class H—Married, with wife and six children	62 6	27½	0 6	½	63 0	28
Class I—Married, with wife and seven or more children	66 6	29½	5 6	2½	72 0	32

This scale applies both to Europeans and Maoris and to town and country districts.

Where local bodies are unable to provide the additional work to employ the men to the nearest half-day above the actual time factor covered by the new scale of relief, on account of the extra wages cost they would have to find, each worker's relief time may be adjusted, if the local body so desires, over a four-weekly period and time less than half-days may be disregarded. Such an adjustment relieves local bodies of the necessity for providing transport, tools, &c., for working-periods of less than half a day.