

SPECIAL WORKS FOR UNEMPLOYED MEN.

In order that employment of a worthwhile nature might be made available for the large numbers of men who, with the cessation of seasonal works, become a charge on the Social Security Fund, arrangements were finalized during June, 1940, with the Public Works, Lands and Survey, and Forestry Departments to employ additional men in certain localities. These works were mainly in country areas, thus involving separation of the men from their families.

A total of 815 men were required for these special works, which were offered to fit and able-bodied men in receipt of unemployment benefit or employed on Scheme No. 13 works. Of the 5,177 men men were offered this employment, there were 845 acceptances of the work and 4,332 refusals. The majority of those who refused did so on account of family or health reasons, and only 330 men refused unconditionally. An examination was made of each case, and those who refused the work without good reason were declared voluntarily unemployed.

Fortunately, it was found necessary to continue the majority of these works for a short period only, as the reopening of the dairy season, followed closely by other seasonal farm-work, quickly absorbed all suitable labour.

SCHEME NO. 4B: FARM-LANDS DEVELOPMENT.

This scheme, which in past years has provided such an excellent avenue for the absorption of unemployed men, has for the period under review attained record proportions, and as it constitutes one of the Division's chief employment measures it is considered advisable to record fully details of its operation.

The scheme provides subsidy up to a maximum of 75 per cent. of the labour-cost with the object of inducing farmers to put in hand useful improvement works which will increase the productivity of their lands and at the same time provide a desirable avenue of employment for available unemployed labour.

The subsidies which apply in respect of the various classes of work are as follows:—

For developmental work, such as bushfelling, stumping, logging, subdivisinal fencing, cutting new drains, deepening and widening existing drains, &c., subsidies of up to 75 per cent. of the actual labour-cost may be approved without the necessity of the farmer submitting a statement of his financial position.

For maintenance-works, such as deferred scrub-cutting, first and two subsequent top-dressings of hill country or other country that is not suitable for machine top-dressing and is to be done by hand, deferred cleaning out of large drains, renewal of subdivisinal fences where substantial amounts of new materials are involved, &c., the granting of subsidies of up to 75 per cent. of the actual labour-cost is considered in relation to the financial position of the farmer as disclosed in a financial statement which is required to be submitted with each such application.

An agreement covering the terms and conditions of employment was last year entered into between the Hon. the Minister of Labour and the New Zealand Workers' Union. This agreement provides for the drawing-up of a specific contract in respect of each job, full details of the work being set out. The contract is signed by the farmer and by all members of the contract party, thus safeguarding the interests of all concerned.

General Conditions.—The men required are allocated from those registered as unemployed. Subsidy is not granted in respect of unregistered men or even in respect of registered men started without the approval of the National Service Department.

The farmer is required to accept full liability for accident insurance, to supply materials (where necessary), tools, accommodation, &c., and also provide transport (at the commencement and completion of the job) to and from the worker's home locality.

The following analysis for the period under review gives some indication of the valuable contribution in the nation's effort to increase production:—

SUMMARY OF SCHEME NO. 4B CONTRACTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1941.

Number of contracts	..	..	..	..	..	5,018
Total number of men allocated	..	..	..	..	..	9,863
Average number of men employed monthly	..	..	..	..	..	2,864
Total labour-cost	..	..	..	..	..	£406,964 11s.
Total of subsidies	..	..	..	..	..	£296,274
Estimated stock increase—						
Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	127,021
Cows	..	..	..	..	..	15,061
Cattle	..	..	..	..	..	12,002
Pigs	..	..	..	..	..	416
Work completed—						
Scrub-cutting	..	..	..	..	..	139,761 acres.
Gorse-grubbing	..	..	..	..	..	42,842 acres.
Stumping	..	..	..	..	..	10,168 acres.
Bushfelling	..	..	..	..	..	5,414 acres.
Drains dug, deepened, and widened	..	..	..	..	..	108,466 chains.
Fencing	..	..	..	..	..	34,219 chains.

Additional work carried out under the scheme comprises river-protection work, top-dressing, track and road formation to enable access to be given to isolated areas, flood-damage restoration, and ploughing of virgin land.