

CIRCULAR 37/33

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR,
Sustenance Branch,
Geological Museum,
Gisborne Street,
Melbourne, C.2.
27th November, 1933.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF ALL EMPLOYING AUTHORITIES.

WORK IN RETURN FOR SUSTENANCE.

The principle embodied in the Work in return for Sustenance system is that as far as possible, the men should not be forced to accept charity with the consequent demoralising and depressing effect on the recipient and that, by working, the men should be able to earn considerably more than the ordinary sustenance rate.

The Municipalities have co-operated very whole-heartedly in this scheme, which would otherwise have been unworkable. That the men themselves approve of the system is obvious from the requests for work repeatedly received from the few remaining districts, where no work is being done.

The necessity for a work test, from the community's point of view is also obvious, when it is stated that in some districts in spite of inspections and precautions, as many as 20% of those receiving sustenance handed in their cards, when work was commenced. A number of these have been and will be prosecuted for fraud.

The success of the system is however, being jeopardised in many areas by the laxity of the supervision or the low percentage of efficiency required.

If the men desire to receive higher rates by working they must be prepared to give a REASONABLE EFFICIENCY WHICH FOR PURPOSES OF A GENERAL DIRECTION SHOULD AVERAGE 70%. If the men do not desire to accept work within their capabilities then they are not in need.

The attention of all employing bodies is drawn to this question of efficiency as it is more demoralising to allow flagrant loafing on the job than to ask for no work at all. Last but by no means least, it is not fair to the men who are giving a reasonable efficiency. If action is not taken against individuals it may seriously jeopardise the continuance of the whole system and a return to the lower rate.

This applies also to travellers, who if they merely treat the work as a joke as some are inclined to do their travellers cards should be taken from them and such men dismissed.

W.S. Kent Hughes

Honorary Minister in Charge of
Sustenance.