

# Working for the dole

Commonwealth relief during  
the Great Depression



This guide is number 15 in the series of Research Guides published by the National Archives.

Guides include the material known to be relevant to their subject area but they are not necessarily a complete or definitive guide to all relevant material in the collection.

The National Archives reviews its collection to confirm the value of records for research, evidential and other purposes or to identify, in consultation with agencies, records for destruction. At the time of publication all the records described in this guide were present in the Archives collection. However, it is possible that some of the records may be destroyed if they are reviewed and considered not to be of enduring value. If this occurs, the guide will be revised accordingly.

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Cover: Building roads in the Federal Capital Territory, c1929. NAA: A3560, 5122



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## INTRODUCTION

### The National Archives of Australia

The National Archives of Australia ensures that full and accurate records documenting Commonwealth Government activities are created and kept. From this massive body of information, the Archives selects, cares for and makes available to all those records of continuing value. This collection constitutes the archives of the Commonwealth Government – a vast and rich resource for the study of Australian history, Australian society and the Australian people.

The collection spans almost 200 years of Australian history. The main focus of the collection is material which documents Federal Government activities since Federation in 1901. There are also significant holdings of nineteenth-century records which relate to functions transferred by the colonies to the Commonwealth Government at the time of Federation and subsequently. The records described in this guide are a small but significant part of the collection.

Access to the National Archives collection is provided free of charge in public reading rooms located in each capital city. Researchers are assisted by specialist reference staff and are provided with reference tools to help them identify and use the records in the collection. These reference tools include the RecordSearch and PhotoSearch databases, guides, publications and fact sheets. Researchers unable to visit a reading room may seek information and help by telephone, mail, facsimile or email.

RecordSearch and PhotoSearch provide information about agencies, persons and series as well as descriptions of over two million individual records. They are available for online searching in reading rooms located in all offices of the National Archives, at the Australian War Memorial and on the National Archives website.

The National Archives website ([www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au)) provides more information about the Archives, its collection and the services it offers. A visit to the site will help you determine whether the Archives holds records relevant to your research. Fact sheets on various topics are also available on the Archives website.

### Using this guide

This guide aims to describe and facilitate access to records held in the National Archives of Australia that deal with the provision of unemployment relief during the Great Depression. It describes records covering a wide range of topics, including the manner in which successive Commonwealth and State Governments managed the unemployment crisis of the Great Depression and the political fallout that resulted from their policies and decisions. The guide also addresses the social and economic impact of Government policies introduced to relieve the plight of the unemployed, and details various public 'relief work' projects, both minor and major, set up in communities around Australia.

The guide aims at comprehensiveness. However, the collection of the National Archives runs to about 300 shelf kilometres of records and clearly only a proportion of items of possible interest to the readers of this guide have been located and identified. Accordingly, the search has targeted the most likely sources of relevant material.

The guide is divided into six chapters, each covering a one-year period during the Great Depression. Chapter 1 (1930) describes records about the Commonwealth Government's initial approach to the unemployment crisis, with particular emphasis on responsibilities for the welfare of the unemployed and early funding initiatives. The routine denial of access to relief work for unemployed women is also addressed.

Chapter 2 (1931) focuses on records about the social impact of unemployment policy in a climate of deepening economic depression; bureaucratic delays in the provision of relief work for the unemployed; the response of trade unions; and the serious political division that existed at both Commonwealth and State levels. This chapter also describes records associated with protests and riots, including the infamous 'Beef Riot' which occurred in Adelaide in 1930.

Chapter 3 (1932) provides information on records on the economic principles of the 'Premiers' Plan', the establishment of State Employment Councils, and the role of these councils in planning 'reproductive' (ie labour-intensive and financially self-liquidating) relief work projects. This chapter also details trade union accusations of inequity in the engagement of relief workers.

Chapter 4 (1933) describes records about funding inadequacies, the mismanagement of available funds, and the relationship between the Loans Council, the Commonwealth Bank and the private banking sector. Popular perceptions of relief work programs are also covered in this chapter.

Chapter 5 (1934) details records documenting the dawning realisation that the welfare of the unemployed was a national concern, and thus a Commonwealth - as opposed to a State - responsibility. This chapter includes an account of the Commonwealth Government's attempts to formulate a national plan for the relief of distress as a result of unemployment, and identifies records that outline a number of ambitious relief work programs suggested by various State Governments.

Chapter 6 (1935) identifies records dealing with the introduction of an expanded public works program to reduce unemployment; measures taken by State Governments to provide food relief, work-for-sustenance programs and reproductive relief works; a national afforestation work scheme; the 'Work for the Dole' program in NSW; and various other schemes for the relief of unemployment.

The appendixes include a chronological sequence of events and details of Commonwealth Government ministries between 1929 and 1932. Lists of senior public servants, economic advisers to the Commonwealth Government and government agencies are also included as appendixes.

## Record descriptions

Each entry in the guide describes a group of records maintained together as a series. A series consists of items, which are often individual files (sometimes volumes, sets of cards, photographs, etc) received into custody by the National Archives from the creating agency or person. Series usually consist of many items, but occasionally may consist of just a few or even a single item.

The description for each series describes its content and function. The entry concludes with a list of items selected from the series. In many instances, particular series have been found to contain relevant material on multiple aspects of unemployment relief during the Great

Depression and have been referred to several times. The full description of each series is given only on its first appearance. As a general rule, this guide identifies rather than analyses the records. Researchers should make their own assessment of the content and value of any item.

### How the records appear in this guide

1.	CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'C' PREFIX, 1929-50	A292
2.	Recorded by: 1930-32	Department of Works and Railways (Central Office) (CA 14)
3.	Quantity:	25.02 metres (Canberra)
4.	Records in this series contain general correspondence about public works projects in the Federal Capital Territory. They include reports, plans and sketches. Some deal with unemployment matters, particularly with provision of relief work for the unemployed.	
5.	<b>Unemployment Relief Scheme - road of access to Westlake settlement, 1930-31.</b>	<b>A292, C1728</b>
6.	This item contains evidence of bureaucratic delay in the organisation of minor relief work.	

### Key

1. This information gives the series title and the date range of the records which make up the series. The series number is shown on the right-hand side.
2. This shows the department or agency which created the series, and the date range during which it created or recorded the records described. The CA (Commonwealth Agency) number is a unique identifier allocated by the National Archives of Australia to each agency. This number can be used to retrieve more information about the agency and its records from RecordSearch.
3. This shows the total volume of records in the series and the office of the National Archives at which the series is held. If copies of records are held in other locations, this is indicated here.
4. This provides a general description of the series.
5. This shows the title of the item together with the date range of the documents on the file. The item's identifying number appears on the right-hand side and must be quoted if a copy of the record, or access to it, is requested.
6. This describes the main contents of each item, but does not describe every document on the file.

### Access to the records

All series described in this guide are listed in the RecordSearch database which is available in the reading rooms of all State offices of the Archives and on the Archives website. Indexes and inventories - available in reading rooms - may also be useful. Reference staff can assist researchers in using these lists.



Regardless of the type of research you undertake at the National Archives, you will only be able to examine open period records (ie 30 years of age or older) that are no longer considered to contain sensitive information.

If individual items within a series have not been examined, you may apply for access to them. There may be a delay while the material is examined. If items are withheld from public access following this examination, reference staff will explain the nature of the information, why it has been withheld, and how to appeal against the decision.

### Citing the records

The correct citation of archival records is important both when requesting them and when referring to them in written or published works. Using proper citations will not only help Archives staff to locate records more readily, but will also help other researchers to find them.

The correct form of citation for records held by the National Archives of Australia is expressed as follows: the name National Archives of Australia followed by a colon, the series number followed by a comma, and then the item number. An example is:

National Archives of Australia: A9951, 74

The name National Archives of Australia may be abbreviated to 'NAA' provided the full name has been used in the first citation.

### Locating additional information

Additional information on unemployment relief during the Great Depression can be located by conducting searches on RecordSearch. Because of the involvement of State Governments in unemployment relief programs, records are also held by State Archives. Suggestions for further reading are listed in Appendix 5.

## 1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

Two days before the New York Stock Exchange crash of 24 October 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression, a Federal Labor Government under the leadership of J H Scullin, having achieved a landslide victory over the National-Country Party coalition, took office in Canberra. The new Government had gained 15 seats and held an overall majority of 17 in the House of Representatives. The situation in the Senate was less promising – only seven of the 36 senators belonged to the Labor side. Despite facing a hostile Upper House, the new Government did not call a double dissolution of Parliament. Frank Anstey, who served as a Federal Labor Minister until March 1931, described the situation succinctly in his memoirs. ‘We had no power’, he recalled, ‘...from the first moment of our existence we were only the stuffed effigy of a government.’<sup>1</sup>

In a political biography of J H Scullin, John Robertson pointed out that the new Prime Minister had inherited a situation in which:

The prices for wool and wheat were low and still falling, a drought had caused a fall in the production of both these commodities, the Government had a large accumulated deficit, unemployment was high and increasing, an adverse balance of trade was causing heavy shipments of gold, the price of Australian bonds on the London market was declining, there was a general stringency in the British financial market, and Australian Governments had unusually heavy loan maturities due in the following year.<sup>2</sup>

A week after it took office, the Government was challenged to explain its unemployment policy, but Senator Daly, Leader of the Government in the Senate, could only state:

The Government has given and is still giving most serious consideration to the question of unemployment. Whatever measures can be taken to alleviate the present position or minimize the effects of unemployment or prevent Australia from getting further into the state of chaos which undoubtedly obtained recently, will be taken by the Government at the earliest possible moment.<sup>3</sup>

During the lead up to Great Depression, however, the banks had begun to regulate the nation’s economic condition in great detail, and consequently any intrusion on their activities by the Government was seen as a threat to stability. The prevailing economic dictum was that at all costs inflation had to be avoided and, with a minority in the Senate, the new Labor Government’s economic policy was effectively dictated by the banks.

Neither employment nor credit could be ‘created’, and the Government was committed to the established doctrine of ‘good business practice’ – of adherence to the tenets of orthodox finance, of balanced budgets, of ‘self-help’, of protectionism, and of waiting stoically until the recovery of prices for primary produce reactivated overseas markets, re-established Australia’s credit rating and restored the standard of living to the level it had been prior to the economic crash. As Boris Schedvin observed in his study of Australia during the Great Depression:

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in P R Hart, *J A Lyons: A Political Biography*, unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1967, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> J Robertson, *J H Scullin: A Political Biography*, University of Western Australia Press, Adelaide, 1974, p. 397.

<sup>3</sup> Senate *Hansard*, 27 November 1929, Government Printer, Canberra, FCT, volume 122, p. 263.

The central objective of economic policy in 1930 was in essence extremely simple – the preservation of external and internal national solvency. It is symptomatic of the state of mind of policy makers that this was accorded a higher order of priority than the prevention of mass unemployment.<sup>4</sup>

No Federal Government had developed a centralised means of delivering unemployment relief before the Great Depression. While Labor Party ideology favoured unemployment insurance as a right, only Queensland had a modest contributory scheme. Instead extensive public works programs funded by overseas loans were commonly used by the States to alleviate unemployment. Other than that, relief for the destitute took the form of charity, with monetary assistance and very basic food rations being provided through a patchwork of agencies and private benevolent organisations in which the participation of Government was incidental.

Throughout the 1920s the unemployment level had been consistently high at around 8%. In 1927, however, it began to increase steadily and the advent of the Great Depression saw it soar to an unprecedented national level for which such ad hoc relief arrangements for the destitute were patently inadequate. At the same time it was no longer feasible to raise external loans to facilitate public works.

On 10 December 1929 the Federal Government announced that £1 000 000 was to be allocated to the States for the provision of relief for the unemployed. Although this sum was a portion of funds set aside by the Commonwealth for roadworks by the States under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement, the unemployment situation necessitated the immediate use of the money. New South Wales received £276 000; Victoria, £180 000; Queensland, £188 000; South Australia, £114 000; Western Australia, £192 000; and Tasmania, £50 000. The Prime Minister, however, made it clear that responsibility for the welfare of the unemployed rested with the States:

Although the funds are being provided by the Commonwealth, the actual disbursement of these moneys is a matter for the States and the proposals for road works must therefore emanate from the State authorities... In some States, though these additional moneys will be actually expended on road work, they may not wholly result in an increased programme beyond that already contemplated. The effect, however, will be to release the funds of the States to relieve unemployment in other directions, and the intention of the Commonwealth Government will thus be carried out. This is a matter for the States to arrange in the best interests of the unemployed.<sup>5</sup>

But the number of workless continued to grow. By the end of 1929, approximately 5 000 people were unemployed in the Prime Minister's own electorate of Yarra, some of whom had been out of work for two years.

## Unemployment relief

It was with qualified optimism that in opening a conference of Commonwealth ministers and State premiers on 20 February 1930, the Prime Minister, James Henry Scullin, said:

We meet in Canberra at a difficult time, and I hope that with the knowledge we possess of the present difficulties, we shall be guided in our discussions

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<sup>4</sup> C B Schedvin, *Australia and the Great Depression: A Study of Economic Development and Policy in the 1920s and 1930s*, Sydney University Press in association with Oxford University Press (South Melbourne), 1988, p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> House of Representatives *Hansard*, 12 December 1929, Government Printer, Canberra, FCT, volume 122, p. 1163.

by a very real sense of the nation's well being. If the present economic and financial outlook of Australia is such as to cause some temporary misgivings, at least we can take heart in the knowledge that, fundamentally, the position of the Commonwealth is quite sound. We are at present in the trough of a wave of financial depression.<sup>6</sup>

The keynote of the conference was economy and accordingly its attendees decided that Australia's rate of expenditure from loan funds would be slashed and the country would endeavour to raise loans internally rather than on overseas markets.

As Leader of the Federal Labor Party, the Prime Minister was bombarded with letters from sectional interests throughout the nation pleading for immediate monetary and material relief for the unemployed. The Government did provide some direct material relief in the form of a free issue of coal to the destitute in Newcastle, NSW, which was surplus to the requirements of the Royal Australia Navy. While the Government refused to allow the homeless to shelter in Defence establishments, it did issue quantities of surplus Australian Army uniforms (dyed from the original khaki in a manner that rendered their wearers conspicuous) and worn-out boots.

Other than that, applicants were informed that although the Commonwealth Government was providing funds to State Governments for the relief of unemployment, the distribution of those funds was strictly a State responsibility. As the Prime Minister informed Parliament on 25 June 1930:

...the question of sustenance is a matter for the State Governments, and the Commonwealth Government has no information that would enable it to determine whether adequate provision is being made.<sup>7</sup>

Given that any relief work provided by the States usually took the form of heavy manual labour, the responses of the premiers to the plight of unemployed women were equally negative.

In July 1930 the Prime Minister announced that in addition to the December 1929 allocation of £1 000 000 already made from the Federal Aid Roads Agreement for the provision of relief work for the unemployed, a further Commonwealth grant of £1 000 000 would be made to the States. The money was to be allotted on a population basis and State premiers would be required to submit detailed schedules of proposed works to the Commonwealth Government. Approval would be granted only to those works that could provide a financial return sufficient to meet associated interest charges and statutory sinking fund contributions. The Commonwealth Government also stipulated that its grant should be used only to provide work for the relief of those already unemployed and that award rates were to be paid to those engaged.

At a meeting in August 1930 State premiers agreed that a considerable proportion of that £1 000 000 should be re-allocated to South Australia in an effort to ameliorate that State's particularly dire economic circumstances. A further Commonwealth grant of £500 000 to the States was specifically granted to provide work for the unemployed prior to Christmas, but this was announced only a week before it was to be paid.

On 17 December 1930, the Acting Prime Minister, J E Fenton, stated in Parliament that no conditions would apply to the rate of pay earned by relief workers. Subsequently, however,

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<sup>6</sup> National Archives of Australia: A786, J19/1.

<sup>7</sup> House of Representatives *Hansard*, 25 June 1930, Government Printer, Canberra, FCT, vol. 125, p. 3 204.

the States were advised by the Commonwealth Government that award rates of pay were mandatory in the case of relief workers. The ensuing correspondence between the Prime Minister, premiers, municipalities, unions and individuals provides an insight into the inequities and problems that were encountered.

State and local authorities had little time to organise relief works and the Commonwealth's insistence on award rates caused difficulties. Moreover, some municipal authorities used their allocation of funds to retain staff who would otherwise have been retrenched rather than to provide work for those already unemployed.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1883-1957

SP339/1

Recorded by: 1926-38 Captain Superintendent, Sydney, and Captain-in-Charge, New South Wales (CA 4338)  
1938-42 Captain-in-Charge (from 1939, Commodore in Charge), HM Australian Naval Establishments, Sydney (CA 4339)

Quantity: 13.71 metres (Sydney)

This series contains correspondence records about the activities of both the British Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy. The series began in 1883 (from Sydney Station, Port of Sydney) and extended to Command Eastern Australia Area in 1957. These records deal with the management of civilian and service establishments, and include material about ships, dockyards, depots, staff management, discipline, navigation, and the establishment and erection of various depots.

**Unemployment relief tax, 1930-41**

**SP339/1, 138/2/48**

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1899-1939

A458

Recorded by: 1923-34 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 50 metres (Canberra)

Files in this series contain general papers, correspondence and Hansard extracts. They deal with subjects that came to the attention of the Prime Minister of the day, particularly those concerned with unemployment relief. Matters such as the increasing number of unemployed, stringency in Government spending and relief work are dealt with.

**Unemployed relief - drill halls and shelters for unemployed, 1923-32**

**A458, AC502/3**

**Unemployment relief - women, 1930-31**

**A458, AL502/3**

This item documents the routine denial of relief work for women and includes correspondence from individuals and from the Women's Workers Union and the Women's Vanguard (Labor Women) about the necessity to provide relief work for single and middle-aged women who were supporting themselves. It includes some details about the responses of the various State Governments to this issue.

- Unemployment relief – £1 000 000 grant to States, 1930–32** A458, AJ502/3  
 This item deals with a Commonwealth grant of £1 000 000 for the relief of unemployment, which was distributed to the States on a population basis.
- It also contains detailed lists of works, proposed as suitable undertakings for relief workers, submitted by the States for approval by the Commonwealth Government; urgent claims on the Commonwealth for payment as individual works were completed; and letters to the Prime Minister from State premiers vigorously denying local allegations of nepotism and delay in the allocation of funds for, and the organisation of, relief work.
- Details of the redistribution of the Commonwealth Government's grant of £1 000 000 to the States for the relief of unemployment as agreed at the Premiers' Conference in August 1930 can also be found in this file.
- Unemployment in Victoria – conferences convened by Premier, 1930–32** A458, AM502/3  
 This item contains an invitation to a conference on unemployment convened by the Premier of Victoria in 1930.
- Unemployment relief – £500 000 grant to States, 1930–32** A458, AN502/3  
 This item includes an admission from the Acting Prime Minister, J E Fenton, in Parliament that the Commonwealth Government could afford to provide only comparatively slight relief to the unemployed. The pre-Christmas grant of £500 000, which was to be disbursed through the State Governments and local authorities, was conditional on work being provided for the unemployed. The extract includes Fenton's response when asked whether the rate of wages to be paid had any attached conditions – he said, 'No.'
- Unemployment relief – provision of money by banks for public works, 1931–32** A458, AS502/3  
 This item describes the disbursement of a Commonwealth grant of £500 000 to the States to provide relief work for the unemployed during the Christmas period. It also contains correspondence between the Acting Prime Minister, J E Fenton, and some State premiers about the practicalities of disbursing the grant in the way stipulated by the Commonwealth Government.
- The file also contains letters from various State municipalities to the Acting Prime Minister expressing gratitude for their allocation of funds. It was not possible, however, to please everyone and the file includes a letter from the President of the Manilla Branch of the Australian Labor Party in which he complains that although Tamworth, a neighbouring town, received £500, Manilla was excluded from the grant and was unable to provide relief for its citizens over Christmas.
- Winter relief – unemployed soldiers, 1933** A458, BB230/16
- Postal concessions for unemployed, 1932–33** A458, BG502/3

**Unemployment relief - general - part 1, 1923-30****A458, C502/3 part 1**

This item documents the growing concern of unions, members of the public and the Government about the increasing level of unemployment, the lack of relief for the unemployed, the need for greater stringency in Government spending and the abuse of relief funds by some authorities. A Hansard extract in the file contains an unequivocal statement by the Prime Minister that State Governments were responsible for the welfare of the unemployed.

The file also includes a letter from the Town Clerk of Walcha to the Prime Minister requesting a grant of £400 from the Federal Aid Roads Agreement to be used for roadwork for the relief of unemployed residents of that town and its surrounding districts; numerous suggestions from individuals for schemes to provide work for the unemployed; and a reply by the Secretary of the Postmaster-General's Department to a representation made by the Prime Minister's Department that Commonwealth unemployment relief funds should be used to extend the telecommunications network.

**£500 000 unemployment relief grant to States - representations regarding method of distribution of amount allocated to Queensland, 1930-31****A458, D502/6**

Instead of being used to provide relief work for the unemployed prior to Christmas, Queensland's share of the £500 000 unemployment relief grant was actually spent retaining local council employees who would otherwise have been retrenched. In this case, the Commonwealth Government's intention was clearly thwarted.

**Unemployed migrants - requests for repatriation, part 1, 1926-31****A458, Q154/19****Unemployed relief grant, 1932 - preference for Australian materials, 1932-33****A458, P502/8**

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1901-39

MP273/1

Recorded by: 1901-39 Postmaster-General's Department, Central Administration (CA 9)

Quantity: 49.14 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains general correspondence files for the Central Administration of Postmaster-General's Department. It records matters relevant to the entire department rather than individual State branches. It includes material from State postal departments which came under the control of the Commonwealth after Federation.

**Leave on furlough where the provision of additional assistance for relief is not involved, 1931****MP273/1, 1931/5030**

## FOLDERS OF COPIES OF CABINET PAPERS, 1901-41

A6006

Recorded by: 1976-81 Australian Archives, Central Office (CA 1720)  
 1981-94 Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office  
 (CA 3196)  
 1994 National Archives of Australia, National Office  
 (CA 7970)

Quantity: 9.18 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in each  
 State office; microfilm (all offices of the Archives)

This series, created by the National Archives of Australia (formerly the Australian Archives), contains Cabinet papers, submissions and other material brought before Cabinet copied from departmental files.

Until 1925 no regular method of recording Cabinet decisions and associated documentation existed, and no systematic recording of decisions made by, or submissions put to, Cabinet took place until 1938. The Cabinet records created between 1925 and 1940 are incomplete, and A6006 effectively fills in the gaps in the collection.

The following items contain papers and submissions for Cabinet meetings held between 1929 and 1932, the duration of the Scullin Ministry. Details of the files they are copied from are provided at the foot of the entries for each paper.

**Preference in employment (returned soldiers), 1930**

A6006, 1930/02/05

This is a paper signed by J A Lyons, Minister for Works, which states in part:

Cabinet decided that preference in employment is to be given to Returned Soldiers, in accordance with the practice adopted in pursuance of the Provisions of the Public Service Act in relation to employment under that Act, but within that preference, employment is to be given firstly to Returned Soldiers who are Unionists.

Parent item

A461, G3/1/8 part 2

**Unemployment - Central Australia, 1930**

A6006, 1930/10/02

This folder contains a submission by the Minister for Home Affairs requesting that funds be provided for the relief of the unemployed in Central Australia.

Parent item

A1, 1934/3577

**Canberra unemployed, 1930**

A6006, 1930/12/16

Parent item

A1, 1930/5912

**Unemployment in Canberra, 1930**

A6006, 1930/12/31

This is a submission made to Cabinet by the Minister for Home Affairs, proposing to use the Parkes Barracks in Canberra to accommodate 80 of Canberra's 152 unemployed single men. The submission indicated that if these men were provided with the scale of relief rations adopted in New South Wales, the cost for food per man would be between 7/- and 8/- per week.

Parent item

A1, 1930/5912 part 1



**Travelling unemployed in Canberra, 1931** A6006, 1931/01/31  
**Parent item** A1, 1930/5912

**Road construction - Federal Capital Territory, 1931** A6006, 1931/02/02  
**Parent item** A1, 1931/3864

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1901-50 A461

Recorded by: 1934-35 Department of External Affairs [II], Central Office  
 (CA 18)  
 1934-50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 143.82 metres (Canberra)

This series contains general correspondence files on matters that came to the attention of the Prime Minister of the day.

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 2, 1931-34** A461, D321/1/1 part 2

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 3, 1934-39** A461, D321/1/1 part 3

**Sales tax - materials purchased for unemployed relief work, 1932-33** A461, C344/4/6

**Unemployment relief - Federal Capital Territory, 1930-34** A461, F351/1/7

This item contains a breakdown of the allocation of funds to, and the numbers of men employed in, each State. No provision for Commonwealth public works was made for the Federal Capital Territory and so no unemployed men were given work there. The item goes on to describe a deputation comprising representatives from community organisations, unions and individual citizens expressing their concerns and pointing out the disproportionately high cost of living in Canberra when compared with Melbourne. In reply to this the Acting Prime Minister, J E Fenton, could say only that the Government was doing all it could to relieve unemployment.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903-38 A1

Recorded by: 1903-16 Department of External Affairs [I], Melbourne  
 (CA 7)  
 1916-28 Department of Home and Territories, Central  
 Office (CA 15)  
 1928-32 Department of Home Affairs [II], (Central Office)  
 (CA 24)  
 1932-38 Department of the Interior [I], Central  
 Administration (CA 27)

Quantity: 455 metres (Canberra)

Records in this series cover administrative and personnel matters for the above agencies. In addition the records cover a diverse range of functions including immigration, emigration, naturalisation and passports (except for the period 1916-18); indentured coloured labour; forestry and forestry education; encouragement of oil and mineral prospecting; and the acquisition, disposal and rental of property.

<b>Schedule of requests received for the distribution of trees to shires and municipalities for the relief of unemployment, 1930</b>		<b>A1, 1930/7943</b>
This item contains information regarding the large number of saplings and shrubs despatched from the Federal Capital Territory to shires and municipalities to provide work for the relief of the unemployed.		
<b>Free bus transport to school for children of the unemployed, 1931-32</b>		<b>A1, 1931/8106</b>
<b>Federal subsidy for extra forestry work in the States to relieve unemployment</b>		<b>A1, 1935/2667</b>
APPLICATIONS FOR LITERARY AND DRAMATIC COPYRIGHT, 1907-69		A1336
Recorded by:	1907-12 Australian Industrial Property Organisation Central Office (CA 555)	
	1913-30 Copyright Office [II] (CA 556)	
	1930-60 Australian Industrial Property Organisation, Central Office (CA 555)	
Quantity:	607.54 metres (Canberra)	
This series contains records about the administration of Commonwealth copyright. Most records in this series contain applications for registration of copyright for literary or dramatic works. Among the many items is an application for copyright registration for a book on the Depression:		
<b>Unemployed! - experiences - 'Down and out in Melbourne' by Charles Martin, c1930</b>		<b>A1336, U24</b>
PROPERTY FILES, 1909-48		SP351/1
Recorded by:	1909-11 Department of Home Affairs [I], Central Office (CA 8)	
	1911-32 Lands and Survey Branch (CA 737)	
	1932-48 Property and Survey Branch (CA 738)	
Quantity:	17.31 metres (Sydney)	
Records in this series contain details and the full history of the acquisition or resumption of land for Commonwealth property in NSW.		
<b>Newcastle (naval land) - removal of Nobby's Camp for the unemployed, 1934-42</b>		<b>SP351/1, CL11837</b>
CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1912-64		SP459/1
Recorded by:	1912-21 Second Military District, New South Wales [I] (CA 6335)	
	1921-39 Second District Base, Australian Military Forces, New South Wales (CA 4334)	
	1939-42 Headquarters, Eastern Command [I], Australian Military Forces (CA 1876)	
Quantity:	65 metres (Sydney)	
Records in this series contain correspondence about the administration function and policy of Eastern Command, including		

accounts, ammunition, Victoria Barracks, camps, casualties, compensation, clothing, establishments, provisions and stores.

**Liverpool Camp - housing of unemployed, 1931-32**

**SP459/1, 518/2/1303**

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'G' PREFIX, 1913-39

A430

Recorded by: 1930-32 Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Branch,  
Department of Home Affairs [II] (CA 756)  
1932-39 Department of the Interior [I]  
1939-51 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department of  
the Interior [II] (CA 757)

Quantity: 4.14 metres (Canberra)

The files in this series record activities undertaken by Commonwealth departments responsible for the administration of the Federal Capital Territory.

**Canberra Unemployment Relief Fund, 1930-31**

**A430, G1**

This item contains interdepartmental memoranda following a decision to engage relief workers to paint Acton Hall in August 1930. The cost of labour was recovered from the Canberra Unemployment Relief Fund Committee, while the cost of materials was met by the Department of Home Affairs, FCT Branch.

**Canberra Unemployment Relief Fund Committee - general matters, 1930-32**

**A430, G180**

This item contains correspondence between the Canberra Unemployment Relief Fund Committee, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Department of Home Affairs, FCT Branch, and the Department of Works about the allocation of funds and the organisation of relief work for Canberra's unemployed.

**Shelter sheds - Westridge bus shelter and Canberra Unemployment Relief Committee, 1930**

**A430, G386**

This item indicates the level of Commonwealth Government involvement in the administration of rudimentary relief work in the FCT. For example, it includes correspondence leading to the granting of ministerial approval for the painting of the bus shelters at Westlake and Westridge by relief workers. The cost of labour was to be met by the Canberra Unemployment Relief Fund Committee, with the balance coming from the Department of Home Affairs, FCT Branch.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'E' PREFIX, 1914-34

A6272

Recorded by: 1930-32 Federal Capital Territory Branch, Department of  
Home Affairs [II] (CA 756)  
1932-39 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department of  
the Interior [I] (CA 757)  
1939-51 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department of  
the Interior [II] (CA 757)

Quantity: 1.44 metres (Canberra)

Items in this series record works and services matters that became the administrative responsibility of the Department of Home

Affairs [III], Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Branch following the abolition of the Federal Capital Commission in April 1930.

Items in this series also contain memoranda, notes, reports, requisitions and extracts of meetings. An emphasis on strict expenditure control and accountability is apparent in files dealing with the provision of relief work for the unemployed in the FCT.

**Unemployment relief work - Canberra City area - maintenance of footpaths and roadways on north and south sides of River Molonglo, 1930**

A6272, E171

**Unemployment relief work - Canberra Swimming Pool - parking area and access, 1930-31**

A6272, E137

This item contains correspondence about the proposed construction of a parking area and access to the Canberra Swimming Pool to provide suitable relief work for six men initially and for 15 men eventually. The estimated cost was £700, of which £415 was to be spent on labour.

**Special relief measures for unemployed persons in the Federal Capital Territory prior to Christmas, 1930-31**

A6272, E175

**Blankets for unemployed from Commissariat Stores, 1929-31**

A6272, E202

**Firewood supplies for unemployed, 1930-34**

A6272, E227

**Unemployed workmen - miscellaneous matters, including accommodation and various general complaints, criticisms and demonstrations, 1930-31**

A6272, E301



**Building roads in the Federal Capital Territory, c1929. NAA: A3560, 5122**

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 'N' PREFIX, 1916-37		A6321
Recorded by:	1933-37 Newnes Investigation Committee (CA 4150)	
Quantity:	1.62 metres (Canberra)	
Records in this series reflect the purpose of the Newnes Investigation Committee, which was established to determine the viability of a commercially sound shale oil industry in the Newnes-Capertee area in New South Wales.		
	<b>Labor Daily report, 1933</b>	<b>A6321, N191</b>
GENERAL POLICY FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'G' PREFIX, 1918-		D2048
Recorded by:	1918-20 Deputy Comptroller of Repatriation, South Australia (CA 3153)	
	1920-65 Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation, South Australia (CA 877)	
Quantity:	14.04 metres (Adelaide)	
This series deals with medical care for returned soldiers, pensions, charitable organisations assisting former soldiers, supply of prostheses, and other matters related to repatriation.		
	<b>Office accommodation and rented premises (permission to erect flood light, stocktaking, general maintenance of buildings, unemployment relief work, rents payable, hired properties, etc), 1927-54</b>	<b>D2048, G206 part 4</b>
	<b>Living and compassionate allowances, 1929-53</b>	<b>D2048, G828 part 5</b>
	<b>Restorations Financial Relief Act 1933, 1931-1954</b>	<b>D2084, G952</b>
	<b>Unemployment Relief Council, 1932-34</b>	<b>D2048, G960</b>
CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1919-42		B1535
Recorded by:	1930-39 Army Headquarters, Department of Defence [II], Victoria (CA 2671)	
	1939 Department of the Army, Central Office (CA 36)	
Quantity:	46 metres (Melbourne)	
This series consists of correspondence records for Army Headquarters dealing with administration, organisation, staffing, training, ordinance, stores and transport. During the Great Depression the Army was required to provide shelter, clothing and stores to the unemployed, and the records listed below reflect this requirement.		
	<b>Establishment of training camps for unemployed men, 1934-35</b>	<b>B1535, 725/1/23</b>
	<b>Unemployment relief - distribution of surplus military clothing, 1932</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/47</b>
	<b>Clothing and boots for unemployed, 1932</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/102</b>
	<b>Boots for unemployed Hobart, 1933</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/109</b>
	<b>Loan of stores for relief of unemployed, 1930-38</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/309</b>

<b>Permanent military forces – effect of the Financial Relief Act, 1933–34</b>	<b>B1535, 856/2/172</b>
<b>Henry Head – Defence reserve – unemployed camps, 1930–38</b>	<b>B1535, 869/3/503</b>
<b>Nobby's – Newcastle, NSW – unemployed camping area, 1930–39</b>	<b>B1535, 869/3/656</b>
<b>Broadmeadows Camp – engineers' depot, Alexandra – use by unemployed, 1930–31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/4/88</b>
<b>Use of Blackboy Hill Camp, WA for unemployed, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/6/7</b>
<b>Defence Department provision towards relief for unemployed, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/20</b>
<b>Blankets, tents and equipment for use of unemployed, 1928–30</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/27</b>
<b>Use of drill hall, Grattan Street, Carlton by unemployed, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/34</b>
<b>Drill Hall, Hurstville – unemployment relief, 1931–32</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/110</b>
<b>Rutherford Camp – application for use by unemployed and use by persons affected by flood, 1931–32</b>	<b>B1535, 869/25/194</b>
<b>Liverpool Camp – use by unemployed, 1930–34</b>	<b>B1535, 869/25/249</b>
<b>Victoria Barracks, Brisbane – use by unemployed homeless girls, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/107</b>
<b>Use of Defence buildings for unemployed women and girls, Sydney, 1930–31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/132</b>
<b>Application for the use of Victoria Barracks, Sydney for use of unemployed, 1930–31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/197</b>
<b>General application for use of drill halls (no specific drill hall) by unemployed, 1925–31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/219</b>
<b>Grattan Street Drill Hall (and other drill halls) – use by unemployed, 1930–32</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/267</b>
<b>Compulsory military training – <i>Labor Daily</i> cuttings, 1933</b>	<b>B1535, 929/19/41</b>
<b>Unemployed members of militia units attending camps, 1932–38</b>	<b>B1535, 929/19/998</b>

DEFENCE (NAVY) SERIES, 1923–38

MP124/6

Recorded by: 1923–38 Navy Office [III], Department of Defence [II]  
(CA 2456)

Quantity: 50.23 metres (Melbourne)

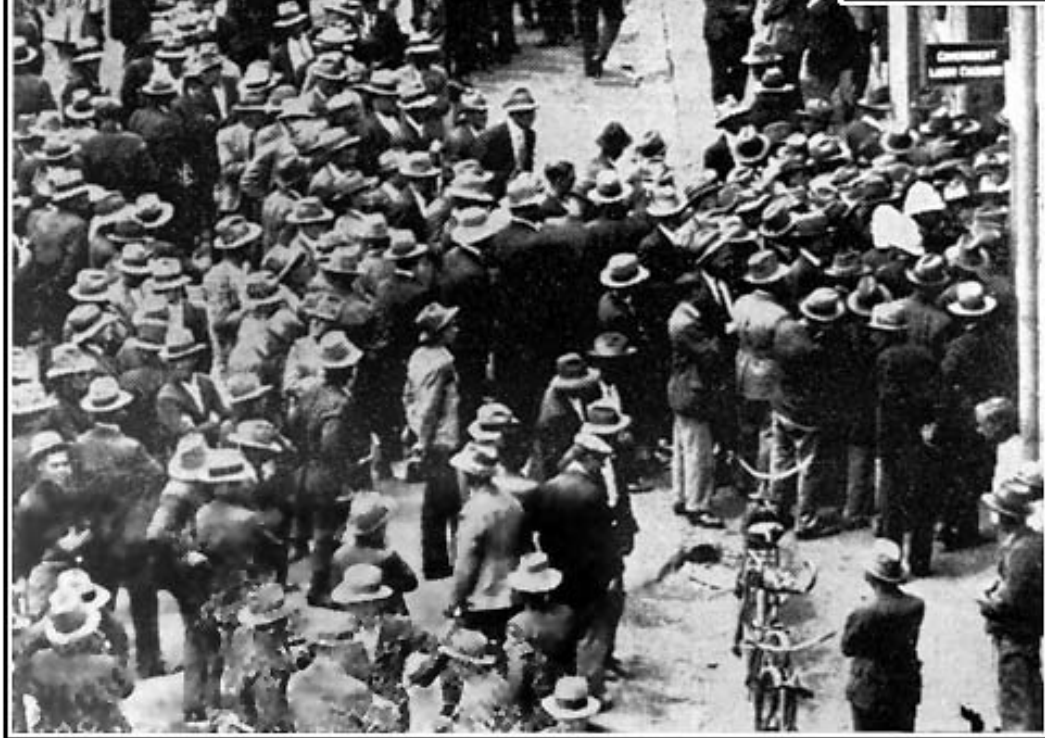
This is a general correspondence series that contains records dealing with the activities of the Navy Office of the Department of Defence.

**Housing fund for the unemployed – request for issue of articles, 1931**

**MP124/6, 603/229/173**



**Men queuing for  
work relief,  
Adelaide, 1930.**  
*National Library  
of Australia:  
Adelaide Register  
News Pictorial,  
3 December 1930*



CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'C' PREFIX, 1929-50

A292

Recorded by: 1930-32 Department of Works and Railways (Central Office) (CA 14)  
 1932-38 Works and Services Branch [I], Canberra (CA 740)  
 1938-39 Department of Works [I], Central Office (CA 30)  
 1939-46 Works and Services Branch [II], Canberra (CA 742)  
 1946-49 Works Director, ACT (CA 743)

Quantity: 25.02 metres (Canberra)

Records in this series contain general correspondence about public works projects in the Federal Capital Territory. Some deal with unemployment matters, particularly with provision of relief work for the unemployed.

**Unemployment relief scheme - road of access to Westlake settlement, 1930-31**

A292, C1728

This item contains evidence of bureaucratic delay in the organisation of minor relief work.

**Unemployed relief works, 1932-33**

A292, C2832

**Unemployed relief - use of skilled men, 1933**

A292, C4937

**Industrial - unemployment - relief workers - allocation for work for end financial year, 1934**

A292, C6118



## 2. POLITICAL DISSENSION AND SOCIAL UNREST

Prime Minister Scullin returned to Australia on 6 January 1931 after a six-month absence in London where he had attended the 1930 Imperial Conference. Four days after his return serious disturbances occurred in Adelaide when unemployed workers, protesting over the content of their food rations, fought with police in the streets in the infamous 'Beef Riot'.

On 22 January 1931 the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration announced a 10% reduction in the basic wage, effective from 1 February 1931. This reduction followed reductions made in the cost of living index and it signalled that the 'needs' of the employee, established by Mr Justice Higgins in 1907 as the criterion of the basic wage, had been replaced by the employers' 'capacity to pay'.<sup>8</sup>

On 26 January 1931 the Prime Minister reinstated E G Theodore as Federal Treasurer in place of J A Lyons. Theodore had resigned this position the previous July after the Queensland Government announced an inquiry into the probity of his personal business affairs. The dissension caused by his reinstatement set in motion events that led to the alienation of both the left and right wings of the Federal Labor Caucus, which culminated in the Labor Government's defeat at the hands of its conservative opponents by the end of the year.

On 29 January 1931, 50 unemployed workers in Darwin who had been refused additional relief work stormed Commonwealth offices and fought with the police. Some policemen were seriously injured and 10 rioters were arrested. In the depressed working-class streets of Sydney and Melbourne some notably vicious battles erupted between the unemployed and police as a result of a campaign of resistance to evictions organised by the Communist-led Unemployed Workers' Movement.

In the opinion of Boris Schedvin, the opening weeks of 1931 marked Australia's 'psychological low point'. The economy was adrift, the Commonwealth Government was divided and the nation faced 'imminent collapse'.<sup>9</sup>

As earlier outlined, prior to Christmas 1930 the Commonwealth Government announced that £500 000 was to be shared among the States to provide relief work for the unemployed. The records show that the Commonwealth Government's attempt to provide relief at short notice was largely thwarted. By February 1931 the money, however inadequate, had still to be disbursed fully in the form of relief work. While State Governments – for whatever reasons – were slow in allocating their share of the funds, some local authorities used the money provided to retain staff rather than to assist the unemployed. Inevitably nepotism occurred in the allocation of relief work, while single unemployed men, forced to keep moving, were simply unable to satisfy the residential qualification required to qualify for relief.

At a conference of State premiers on 6 February 1931 the Prime Minister remarked that, in his Government's experience, funding public works merely to relieve the unemployed was wasteful. Instead a program of public works was required that would both relieve unemployment and also provide taxpayers with a financial return on their investment. The Prime Minister observed, however, that in the long term only a revival of production

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<sup>8</sup> L J Louis and I Turner, *The Depression of the 1930s*, Cassell, Melbourne, 1968, p. 77.

<sup>9</sup> C B Schedvin, *Australia and the Great Depression: A Study of Economic Development and Policy in the 1920s and 1930s*, Sydney University Press in association with Oxford University Press (South Melbourne), 1988, p. 212.

would put an end to unemployment.<sup>10</sup> At the same conference the Treasurer, E G Theodore, proposed a mildly inflationary plan involving a moderate expansion of credit to stimulate trade. This plan met with implacable opposition from the Board of the Commonwealth Bank, then chaired by Sir Robert Gibson, to whom inflation was anathema.

In March 1931 some individuals and organisations like the chambers of commerce sought to resurrect the discredited notion of ameliorating urban unemployment by placing unemployed men and their families on rural smallholdings. Others, with more practical experience, spoke of the 'destitute unemployed' and of 'terrible times' on the land. On 6 March 1931 the unemployed rioted outside the Treasury Building in Perth, Western Australia.<sup>11</sup>

Later in the same month, the NSW Premier, J T Lang, repudiated interest payments due on loans raised by his Government on the London money market. The Commonwealth Government, having been forced to pay the amounts due, began legal proceedings to recover the money from NSW. Meanwhile, depositors in the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, fearing for the safety of their capital, began a run on the bank which forced it to close its doors on 23 April 1931.



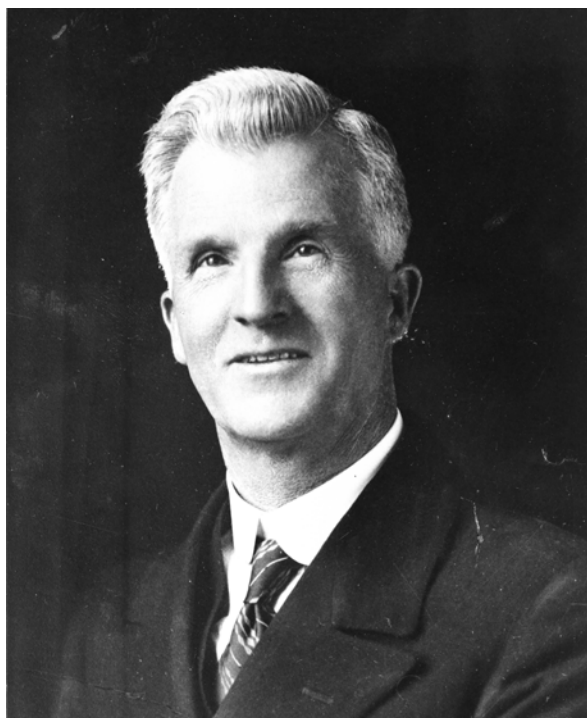
**J A Beasley (centre), leader of Lang Labor, with Jack Lang, Premier of New South Wales, and other members of Lang Labor. NAA: M1409/1, item 4**

<sup>10</sup> J Robertson, *J H Scullin: A Political Biography*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1974, p. 306.

<sup>11</sup> G C Bolton, *A Fine Country to Starve in*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1972, p. 150.

In March, too, Lang's candidate, E J Ward, won the safe Federal Labor seat of East Sydney in a by-election. Upon entering Parliament, he was promptly excluded from Caucus by the Prime Minister on the basis that he had not been elected on a Federal Labor platform. This provoked the secession of six other members of Scullin's party who then formed a group under the leadership of J A Beasley. This group, 'Lang Labor', owed its allegiance to its namesake who was Theodore's implacable rival for political pre-eminence. On 13 March 1931, Lang Labor enabled Scullin to defeat a no-confidence motion during which five members of Scullin's party, including J E Fenton (former Acting Prime Minister) and J A Lyons (former Acting Treasurer), crossed the floor of the House of Representatives to vote with the Opposition Nationalists. It was clear then that Lang Labor held the balance of power in the House of Representatives.

During March, April and May 1931, Scullin and Theodore sought to enact mildly inflationary measures by introducing a series of Bills. These included the Fiduciary Notes Bill, by which it was proposed to expand the note issue by some £18 000 000; the Bank Interest Bill, an attempt by the Government to reduce government and private interest rates charged by the banks; and the Commonwealth Bank Bill (No. 2), by which the Government proposed to ship gold to London to redeem Treasury bills due on 30 June 1931. On 2 April 1931, however, Sir Robert Gibson, Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank Board and apostle of 'orthodox' finance, issued an ultimatum: unless the Commonwealth and State Governments reduced their deficits and made serious attempts to balance their budgets, the board would refuse them further short-term accommodation. On 17 April 1931 the Senate rejected the Fiduciary Notes Bill and on 13 May, after Sir Robert had opposed it at the Bar of the House, the Commonwealth Bank Bill (No. 2) was also defeated. On 7 May 1931 J A Lyons emerged as the head of the new United Australia Party and leader of the conservative Opposition parties. Three days later NSW police resorted to firearms to counter resistance organised by the militant Unemployed Workers' Movement during a riot on the South Coast at the Bulli ration depot.



**James Henry Scullin, Prime Minister,  
1929-31. NAA: A1200, L11185**



**Joseph Aloysius Lyons, Prime Minister,  
1932-39. NAA: A1200, L12454**

In its search for an effective domestic policy in a time of worldwide economic depression, the Commonwealth Government was heavily influenced by academic economists whose advice was that governments must, in accordance with the canons of orthodox finance, balance their budgets. Radicals, meanwhile, justified a policy of deficit finance on the basis that attempts to balance the budget must result in a reduction in consumption that would merely serve to deepen the Depression. One side opposed credit expansion while the other advocated that the Government should print banknotes outside the control of the Commonwealth Bank. While conservatives insisted that Australia must pay its overseas debts as they fell due, supporters of J T Lang and the Labor left advocated default on those debts. On 25 May 1931, a Premiers' Conference began in Melbourne, which, after three weeks of discussion, resulted in the formulation of the 'Premiers' Plan'.

The Premiers' Plan ostensibly received the agreement of all State premiers, including J T Lang. The plan was severely deflationary and reduced all adjustable Government expenditure, when compared to that of 30 June 1930, by 20% including wages, pensions and social services. Outstanding loans were to be converted to internal borrowing at lower rates of interest for longer periods. The Senate then approved legislation to permit the shipment of £5 000 000 of gold reserves to meet maturing Treasury bills in London.

In July, Prime Minister Scullin called on State premiers to provide schedules of proposed relief works for the unemployed in an attempt to convince the Commonwealth Bank Board that such works would materially benefit the community. While the neo-fascist New Guard established itself in the conspicuously depressed NSW industrial areas of Wollongong and Bulli, a committee report presented to another Premiers' Conference on 3 September 1931 warned of the very real danger of a breakdown in the nation's social structure unless unprecedented measures were taken to provide the unemployed with immediate relief.

Two weeks later the Commonwealth Bank Board acceded to the Commonwealth Government's request that credit of £3 000 000 be provided for wheat-growers. At the same time a request for £5 000 000 credit for the immediate provision of relief work for the unemployed was refused on the basis that such a large amount would endanger the financial fabric of Australia. The banks were only prepared to consider 'reproductive' and financially sound propositions if they were submitted directly to them by local governing bodies.

Regulations determining eligibility for dole payments were tightened in NSW. The provision of any form of relief was made conditional on registration for a continuous period of 14 days, which created consternation among workers like coal miners who might be employed for only a few days each fortnight. However, when the Miners' Federation and the Unemployed Workers' Union called for mass disobedience, the response from workers was muted.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of October 1931 the Prime Minister launched a propaganda campaign using the slogan 'Confidence is returning'. To encourage employers to recruit staff, he announced early in November 1931 that unemployed workers would be engaged in the relief work of renovating Commonwealth property in each of the States. The enactment of the *Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1931* enabled the use of £250 000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to engage relief workers in the pre-Christmas period. Despite the provision of work, confusion ensued, along with complaints of duplication of official

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<sup>12</sup> L Richardson, *The Bitter Years: Wollongong During the Great Depression*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1984, pp. 86-87.

agencies and of Commonwealth intrusion on State responsibilities. And then, it appears, J T Lang reached the end of his tolerance of the Scullin Ministry.

In the House of Representatives on 13 November 1931, the Lang Labor group accused E G Theodore of political graft. The group claimed that Theodore had secured political support in his electorate of Dalley by providing foreknowledge of Commonwealth-funded relief work and the means to secure it for Cockatoo Island Dockyard, which adjoined his electorate.

J A Beasley introduced a motion to investigate the matter and Scullin accepted it as a question of confidence in his Ministry. When the vote was taken, Lang Labor, under the leadership of 'Stabber Jack' Beasley, voted with the conservative Opposition and Scullin's Labor Government was defeated. An election for both Houses held on 19 December 1931 proved a sweeping victory for the forces of conservatism. Lyons, leading the United Australia Party, emerged as the new Prime Minister. Scullin led his party in Opposition and Theodore departed the political scene, never to return.

When addressing the assembled State premiers in February 1931, Prime Minister Scullin stated that the main burden of economic depression was being borne by the unemployed and by the primary producers. When, on 21 December 1931, he tendered his resignation to the Governor-General, Australia had already some reason for hope. National income had not improved, but there was some indication that the deterioration of the economy was slowing. Then, too, financial crises both internal and external had been negotiated, however precariously. But the number of people out of work continued to increase. For the unemployed, the nadir of the Great Depression was yet to be plumbed.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1899-1939

A458

Recorded by: 1923-34 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 49.77 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment relief grants - awards, conditions and rates of pay, 1931-32**

A458, AQ502/3

This item describes some of the problems encountered in the allocation of relief work to the unemployed in Queensland. Included in this item is a letter from the Brisbane City Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners calling on the Commonwealth to ensure that relief workers received award rates of pay and conditions.

The society complained that in Queensland, regardless of the type of work performed, relief workers were paid at a flat rate of £3 per week with no margin for skill. This, the society claimed, was a conspiracy to break down award conditions.

**Unemployment Secretariat Committee - report to Premiers' Conference, 1928-31**

A458, AR502/3 part 4

This item contains an employment and production report advocating the adoption of 'drastic and perhaps unprecedented measures' to relieve unemployment and prevent a breakdown of the nation's social structure.

**Unemployment relief – provision of money by banks for public works, 1931–32**

A458, AS502/3

This item deals with the provision of funding for relief work. It includes Hansard extracts about delays in organising relief work and the approaches made by the Government to the banks.

The item contains correspondence between the Prime Minister and Sir Robert Gibson about the necessity of £5 000 000 to provide more public works for the relief of the unemployed. Sir Robert believed this would endanger the financial fabric of Australia but eventually agreed to provide a much smaller amount.

The provision of these funds, however, depended on local government bodies submitting 'reproductive' and sound proposals for relief work to the Commonwealth Bank Board.

By 'reproductive' the Board meant that relief works should be capable of generating immediate financial returns sufficient to service both loan interest and sinking fund charges.

**£500 000 unemployment relief grant to States – representations regarding method of distribution of amount allocated to New South Wales, 1930–31**

A458, B502/6

This item illustrates the difficulties of equitably distributing the Commonwealth's unemployment relief grant in New South Wales. It details the degree of suffering experienced in various rural areas. In Tamworth and its surrounding district, for example, around 1 600 people were unemployed and becoming destitute.

**Unemployment relief – general, 1931–32**

A458, C502/3 part 2

This item deals with competing claims for Commonwealth relief funds from various bodies and communities. It contains reports of economic distress and suffering in rural communities.

It also contains a suggestion put forward by a conference of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in March 1931, that the urban unemployed should be relocated to rural small holdings. The response of the NSW Unemployed Workers' Union to this suggestion is also included in the file.

**£500 000 unemployment relief grant to States – representations regarding method of distribution of amount allocated to Victoria, 1931**

A458, C502/6

This item deals with the provision of relief work in Victoria which was funded by the Commonwealth's £500 000 grant.

It contains a report from the Premier of Victoria stating that the grant had largely been spent on municipal works such as repairs to jetties, harbours and bridges; drainage improvements; coal boring; clearing and improving Crown land; and foreshore improvements around Port Phillip Bay. An estimated 1 500 men were provided with employment. These included stone masons, bricklayers, carpenters, painters, plumbers, plasterers, bridge carpenters, ordinary labourers, drill hands and builders' labourers.

**£250 000 grant, 1931 – method of engaging labour for unemployment relief works, 1931–32**

A458, C502/7

This item deals with long-term unemployment, the preferences made in the allocation of relief work, accusations of favouritism and the confusion caused by the creation of Commonwealth employment bureaus, which duplicated functions performed by State agencies.

**£500 000 unemployment relief grant to States – representations regarding method of distribution of amount allocated to Queensland, 1930–31**

A458 D502/6

This item deals with the problem of equitably distributing the Commonwealth unemployment relief grant in Queensland. Difficulties arose when local authorities persisted in using their share of the funding to continue to employ their own workers, who would otherwise be dismissed, rather than to provide relief for the unemployed.

The Town Clerk of the Brisbane City Council justified this action by observing that it was better to retain experienced men rather than making them redundant to employ less competent workers:

...I can see no distinction in principle, when the grant is utilised to obtain employment for men who would otherwise have been added to the list of unemployed, than by engaging a fresh lot of workers who are already out of work. Moreover, to engage entirely new men would add to the difficulties and responsibilities of the Council in organising and supervising the work, as keener supervision would be required with greater expense to the Council.

The file contains further documentation on this matter, which clearly reveals that the Commonwealth Government's intentions for the use of the grant had been thwarted.

**£500 000 unemployment relief grant to States, representations regarding method of distribution of amount allocated to South Australia, 1931**

A458, E502/6

This item deals with the provision of work relief in SA and the difficulties it sometimes caused. For example, the file contains a letter sent to the Prime Minister by the South Australian Branch of the Communist-influenced Unemployed Workers' Movement, complaining that the provision of relief work reduced the entitlement of the unemployed to sustenance food rations.

This item also contains a detailed schedule of the relief work projects on which the Commonwealth allocation of funds to SA were spent. These works included road construction; sand levelling to improve foreshores; dam and drain construction; grubbing and clearing back country roads; raising stone for roads and paving gutters; removing sand drifts; constructing crossings over creeks; strengthening and repairing bridges; floodwater schemes; and levelling and improving parklands.

**£500 000 unemployment relief grant to the States – Western Australia, 1930–31**

A458, F502/6

This item deals with the provision of relief work in WA, which was funded by the Commonwealth's grant of £500 000 to the States. It contains a report from the Premier of WA, Sir James Mitchell, to

the Prime Minister stating that WA's share of the grant had provided work for long-term 'destitute' unemployed. The funds were allocated through local government bodies and used for roadwork and forestry operations (eg clearing pine plantations). Those engaged on each occasion, the Premier reported, were the 'destitute unemployed.'

**Unemployment and business stability, 1927-30** A458, N502/3 part A

**Unemployment and business stability, 1929-32** A458, N502/3 part B

Correspondence in this two-part file details the piecemeal distribution of relief funds by the States. It indicates clearly that the Federal Government's intention to provide relief work for the unemployed immediately prior to Christmas 1930 was thwarted by bureaucratic delays by the States themselves.

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, ALPHABETICAL PREFIX, 1899-1983 A518

Recorded by: 1928-41 Territories Branch, Prime Minister's Department (CA 822)  
1941-51 Department of External Territories [I], Central Office (CA 42)  
1951-56 Department of Territories [I], Central Office (CA 60)

Quantity: 241.57 metres (Canberra)

In addition to covering the governing, administration and development of external territories such as New Guinea, Nauru and Norfolk Island, records in this series also cover some aspects of the administration of the Northern Territory - eg prisons and prisoners and the employment of government officers. The records are concerned with a diverse range of subjects, including agriculture; fishing and fisheries; forestry; public works; communications; employment; and the Public Service.

**Territories - information re numbers of unemployed in Territories, 1932-33** A518, CB112/1

FOLDERS OF CABINET PAPERS, 1901-41 A6006

Recorded by: 1976-81 Australian Archives, Central Office (CA 1720)  
1981-94 Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office (CA 3196)  
1994 National Archives of Australia, National Office (CA 7970)

Quantity: 9.18 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in each State office; microfilm (all offices of the Archives)

This series is more fully described in Chapter 1. It was created by the National Archives of Australia (formerly the Australian Archives) to make access to Cabinet documents easier. It contains Cabinet papers, submissions and other material originally copied from departmental files.

Details of parent files are provided at the foot of the entries for each paper.



**Disturbance at Darwin, 1931** **A6006, 1931/01/31**

This item contains a report presented to Cabinet into a disturbance that occurred in Darwin in January 1931. Unemployed workers in Darwin, who had been receiving one day's relief work per week, demanded two days' work. When informed that funds were not available for this, 50 unemployed men occupied Government offices in Darwin. When police attempted to move them, a riot ensued. Four policemen were injured, two seriously, and 10 arrests were made.

**Parent item** **A1, 1931/4202**

**Unemployment relief works, 1931** **A6006, 1931/10/29**

This item deals with the allocation of funds from a £250 000 Commonwealth grant to provide relief work for the unemployed.

**Parent item** **A458, AT502/3**

**Unemployment relief - Canberra artisans, 1931** **A6006, 1931/11/06**

This item deals with the provision of relief work in Canberra. It was proposed that £10 000 should be spent on sealing some of Canberra's roads. The work was to be done by unskilled local labour.

**Parent item** **A1, 1933/222**

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1901-50 **A461**

Recorded by: 1934-35 Department of External Affairs [II], Central Office (CA 18)  
1934-50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 143.82 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Sales tax - materials purchased for unemployed relief work, 1932-33** **A461, C344/4/6**

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 2, 1931-34** **A461, D321/1/1 part 2**

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 3, 1934-39** **A461, D321/1/1 part 3**

**Unemployment relief - Federal Capital Territory, 1930-34** **A461, F351/1/7**

This item includes minutes from a meeting of Prime Minister Scullin with a deputation of unemployed 'travellers' who had arrived in the FCT. Itinerant unemployed were forced to keep moving and were unable to stay in one place for the six weeks it took to register for unemployment relief.

The item also includes a letter from Mrs Kelly from Molonglo settlement who wrote to the Prime Minister enclosing her household bills. The Minister for Home Affairs responded that he was '...unable to see his way clear to approve of the payment of the amount of your indebtedness from public funds'. The bills were returned to her.

"Byron",

6 Frederick Street,  
Concord.

March 17th 1931.

Dr Richard Arthur.

Dear Sir,

At a special meeting of the Unemployed Workers' Union of Concord your plan of land settlements as explained by Mr Fleming was fully discussed. Every available press report and article on the subject was also read to the meeting. The meeting discussed the plan for over one hour and a half. They then unanimously passed a motion to the effect that the Union would not co-operate with the citizen's committee in such a crude and inexperienced method of settling poor unfortunates on small holdings. The idea was looked upon not only as being un-thought-out but as vicious; whereby those down and out, grasping at any straw, would be coaxed or economically forced into a living hell during the winter months.

Many men of experience in every line of primary production spoke very strongly against the foolishness of the mattock and spade suggestion unless to dig the graves of those who die from exposure during the winter. As to giving the settlers fowls and goats etc it would then be necessary to have a fodder ration added to the existing dole for even animals have to eat to live. It was also suggested that you and the committee prove the soundness of your scheme by

pioneering the first settlement for six months under the conditions you expect others to live.

This is the feeling of our meeting the judgment of which was on sound reason, experience and work. Trusting you will accept it as such. The problem which has to be faced now is an educated unemployed and not the rabble of the past. Thanking you for the opportunity of investigating your scheme and Mr Fleming for his kindness in coming to our meeting last Friday.

Yours Sincerely,

*W. H. Anderson*  
President of Unemployed Workers' Union Concord.



Suggestions that the urban unemployed should be settled onto small land holdings were not met with universal enthusiasm. NAA: A458, C502/3 part 2

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1901-	A432
Recorded by: 1929- Attorney-General's Department, Central Office (CA 5)	
Quantity: 2 098.17 metres (Canberra); 352.62 metres (Sydney)	
This is the main file series of the Attorney-General's Department. The series began in 1929, replacing existing systems, and contains material dating from 1901.	
<b><i>The Workers' Weekly, 27/12/29 - seditious article - 'Workers' Defence Force', 1930</i></b>	<b>A432, 1930/77</b>
<b>Appropriation (Unemployment Relief Works) Act 1931</b>	<b>A432, 1931/02006</b>
This item contains a copy of the Commonwealth's <i>Appropriation (Unemployment Relief Works) Act 1931</i> , enacted to provide £250 000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund relief work projects for the unemployed.	
<b>Australian Postal Workers' Union, Broken Hill - payment of State unemployment taxation by Commonwealth officers, 1931</b>	<b>A432, 1931/2064</b>
<b><i>Labour Daily, 1932</i></b>	<b>A432, 1932/751</b>
<b>Central Unemployed Committee - deputation to the Attorney-General, 1932</b>	<b>A432, 1932/1251</b>
<b>J T Jennings, MP - socialistic meetings, 1932</b>	<b>A432, 1932/1569</b>
<b>Proposed interception of consignments of <i>Workers' Weekly</i> and <i>Red Leader</i>, 1933</b>	<b>A432, 1933/302</b>
<b>Communist Party - general, 1928-51</b>	<b>A432, 1955/4422 part 1</b>
CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903-38	A1
Recorded by: 1903-16 Department of External Affairs [I], Melbourne (CA 7)	
1916-28 Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (CA 15)	
1928-32 Department of Home Affairs [II], (Central Office) (CA 24)	
1932-38 Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)	
Quantity: 454.65 metres (Canberra)	
This series was described in Chapter 1.	
<b>Unemployment relief - rates etc payable in States and the Northern Territory, 1931</b>	<b>A1, 1931/3121</b>
This file details rates of relief, food scales, and the manner in which relief was distributed to the unemployed in the various States and Territories of the Commonwealth. In Queensland, for example, relief work rates of pay were £2 10s per week for single men and £3 per week for married men with work being rotated in periods of approximately 12 weeks. In Darwin, though the period of rotation is not recorded, unemployed single men received work to the value of £1 per week, and married men £1/10/- per week.	

<b>Communist meetings in Darwin streets, 1930-32</b>	<b>A1, 1932/183</b>
<b>Vegetable farms for the unemployed - Federal Capital Territory, 1932</b>	<b>A1, 1932/2139</b>
<b>Reproductive works for the absorption of unemployed, 1931-32</b>	<b>A1, 1933/222</b>
<b>Unemployment relief work - Northern Territory - special grant, 1931-34</b>	<b>A1, 1933/264</b>
<b>Unemployment - utilisation of unemployed by contractors, 1933</b>	<b>A1, 1933/3906</b>
<b>Peanut growing for unemployed in North Australia, 1930-34</b>	<b>A1, 1934/5886</b>
<b>Unemployment and relief work, Canberra, 1931-35</b>	<b>A1, 1935/2405</b>
<b>This item details the provision of food rations and relief work to unemployed residents of Canberra between June 1930 and June 1931.</b>	
<b>CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1903-44</b>	<b>A1606</b>
Recorded by: 1926-c1927 Department of External Affairs [II], Central Office (CA 18)	
1926-39 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)	
Quantity: 5.85 metres (Canberra)	
Records in this series cover a wide variety of subjects.	
<b>Publications - revolutionary socialist, 1927-38</b>	<b>A1606, B33/1</b>
<b>SPECIAL FILES, SF SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1905-51</b>	<b>A467</b>
Recorded by: 1905-51 Attorney-General's Department, Central Office (CA 5)	
Quantity: 32.04 metres (Canberra)	
Records in this series deal with miscellaneous and diverse subjects. They include records extracted from other correspondence series, transcripts of evidence from commissions of inquiry and legal cases, and printed material such as pamphlets and statutes.	
<b>Darwin Unemployed Workers - protest re seizure of typewriters, duplicator, etc - the property of the Communistic Party of Australia, 1935</b>	<b>A467, bundle 20/SF7/63</b>
<b>Confidential report by Defence Department - Communists and other organisations, 1933</b>	<b>A467, bundle 89/SF42/2</b>
<b>Fitzroy general unemployed - protest re prohibition and importation of communistic propoganda by Messrs Collins, Goodman and Hutchin, 1934</b>	<b>A467, bundle 94/SF42/12 34/1622</b>

MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS, 1905-69

AA1972/341

Recorded by: 1950-71 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 3.15 metres (Canberra)

This series contains miscellaneous papers about the functions and responsibilities of the Prime Minister's Department. It also includes papers from a number of Commonwealth and State consultative committees.

**Australia's reconstruction plans - a policy for unemployment relief, and future development, 1931**

AA1972/341, 271

This item deals with the Commonwealth Government's policy on relief works and reconstruction, and includes a policy paper entitled *Australia's Reconstruction Plans: A Policy for Unemployment Relief and Future Development*.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'G' (GENERAL) PREFIX, 1913-39

A430

Recorded by: 1930-32 Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Branch, Department of Home Affairs [II] (CA 756)  
 1932-39 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department of the Interior [I] (CA 757)  
 1939-51 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department of the Interior [II] (CA 757)

Quantity: 4.14 metres (Canberra)

This series is described in Chapter 1.

**Canberra Unemployment Relief Committee - general matters, 1930**

A430, G180

The material contained in this item is wide-ranging. It deals in some detail with the funding, cost and type of employment relief work projects undertaken in the FCT.

The item also covers issues such as the equitable distribution of work, the number of married and single men unemployed in the FCT and the continuation of voluntary subscriptions to Canberra's unemployment relief fund by officers of the Commonwealth Public Service. The item also deals with the amount of work received by unemployed single men (three days' worth in six weeks), the food rations they received and the conditions under which they lived.

**Unemployment relief - schedule of reproductive works for (as submitted to Premiers' Conference, 1931), 1931-32**

A430, G1260

This item contains the schedule of proposed relief works for the FCT. The relief works had to meet the Commonwealth Bank's definition of 'reproductive' as well as being beneficial to the community. Proposed projects included destroying noxious weeds, ringbarking trees, fencing and roadworks, and reservoir construction.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'E' PREFIX, 1914-34

A6272

Recorded by: 1930-32 Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Branch,  
Department of Home Affairs [II] (CA 756)  
1932-39 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department  
of the Interior [I] (CA 757)  
1939-51 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department  
of the Interior [II] (CA 757)

Quantity: 1.44 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment relief work - Canberra Swimming Pool -  
parking area and access, 1930-31**

A6272, E137

This item contains interdepartmental correspondence about problems encountered in providing relief work for the unemployed in the FCT.

**Special relief measures for unemployed persons in the Federal  
Capital Territory prior to Christmas, 1930-31**

A6272, E175

**Canberra unemployment relief work - Federal Highway and  
Northbourne Avenue, city - extended tree planting, 1931**

A6272, E180

This item contains correspondence about possible schemes to provide relief work for Canberra's unemployed, including a tree-planting project along the Federal Highway and along Northbourne Avenue and the Federal Highway. It was estimated that planting one mile of trees at 25-foot intervals would employ 16 men for eight days and that planting  $3\frac{1}{3}$  miles would employ 16 men for 27 days.

**Unemployment relief works - allocation of funds for surveys**

A6272, E194

This item contains a review of possible relief projects for the Federal Capital Territory. The list included activities such as tree planting, stormwater drainage, improvements to sporting facilities, and the establishment of footpaths.

**Blankets for unemployed from Commissariat Stores, 1929-31**

A6272, E202

**Firewood supplies for unemployed, 1930-34**

A6272, E227

**Unemployed workmen - miscellaneous matters, including  
accommodation and various general complaints, criticisms and  
demonstrations, 1930-31**

A6272, E301

**Unemployment relief work - road construction from Franklin  
Street along southern arc of Manuka Circle, 1931**

A6272, E376

This item contains correspondence about the practicality of road improvements within the FCT to provide relief work at a time when some 410 Canberra residents were registered as unemployed.

**Unemployment relief works – reconstruction of portion between Canberra Avenue and State Circuit, 1931–32** **A6272, E434**

This item includes correspondence between the Civic Administrator and the heads of the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Works about unemployment relief work on Canberra roads.

**Unemployment relief special grant of £12 000, November 1931 (reproductive works schedules submitted to Premiers' Conference, 1931, vide E556), 1931–32** **A6272, E677**

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES – COMMONWEALTH INVESTIGATION SERVICE, 1916–60

A8911

Recorded by: 1916–19 Special Intelligence Bureau, Central Office, Melbourne (CA 746)  
 1919–46 Investigation Branch, Central Office, Melbourne and Canberra (CA 747)  
 1946–60 Commonwealth Investigation Service, Central Office (CA 650)

Quantity: 3.6 metres (Canberra)

This is an artificial series comprising Commonwealth Investigation Service records transferred to the National Archives by the Australian Security Intelligence Organization.

**General (Communist Party, 'White Australia', Federal elections, trade union movement), 1928–35** **A8911, 48**

**CPA industrial department (Unemployed Workers' Movement, timber strike, pastoral and mining matters, ACTU and minority movements), 1930–32** **A8911, 67**



**Digging trenches, FCT, 1929. NAA: A3560, 5440**

- CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 'G' SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1918-74 A2421
- Recorded by: 1929-52      Repatriation Commission [II], Registry (CA 225)
- Quantity: 110.25 metres (Canberra)
- This series mainly consists of correspondence about the administration of departmental functions in areas such as institutions, benefits, committees, staff, stores and equipment.
- Unemployment relief grant, 1931-33** **A2421, G854 part 1**
- This item contains correspondence between the Repatriation Commission, the Prime Minister's Department, and the Commonwealth Department of Works about the commission's application for unemployment relief funds.
- HQ MISCELLANEOUS FILES - INVESTIGATION BRANCH, COMMONWEALTH INVESTIGATION SERVICE AND ASIO, 1920-67 A9108
- Recorded by: 1968      Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Central Office (CA 1297)
- Quantity: 24.48 microfilm metres (Canberra)
- This series consists of microfilmed security intelligence files of diverse origin and content, most created the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) and many inherited from its predecessors, including the Investigation Branch and the Commonwealth Investigation Service.
- The records cover a wide range of subjects and persons investigated between 1920 and 1967, and are representative of several series of records created during this time, both by ASIO and pre-ASIO agencies.
- Australian Communist Party - direct action, demonstrations and tactics, 1925-42** **A9108, roll 19/9**
- CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER (MELBOURNE) SERIES, 1922-60 A705
- Recorded by: 1922-39      Air Services Branch (CA 778)
- Quantity: 665.82 metres (Canberra)
- This is the main correspondence file series used by the Royal Australian Air Force from 1922 until 1960. The series covers general administration; technical and specialist matters; the procurement and disposal of equipment; personnel matters; and the leasing of land and buildings.
- Unemployment relief scheme (works), 1931** **A705, 221/1/88**
- Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934, 1934-35** **A705, 7/101/8**
- Civil aviation - unemployment relief funds - proposals re Commonwealth-State loan, June, 1932** **A705, 7/101/39**
- Unemployment - relief work on aerodromes in WA, 1935** **A705, 7/112/75**



## CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1922-97

K279

Recorded by: 1922-32 Public Works Branch, Western Australia (CA 760)  
 1932-46 Works and Services Branch, Western Australia  
 (CA 971)

Quantity: 175 metres (Perth)

Records in this series deal with a diverse range of activities undertaken by the Public Works Branch and its successors in Western Australia. The records contain correspondence, design drawings, contracts, minutes and press releases.

Matters dealt with include administrative, finance, tender and quotation procedures; contract conditions; material specifications; instructions on the engagement of consultants; fire protection policy and standards; standard specifications and requirements of State and Commonwealth instrumentalities; and project files on various construction projects (including War Service Homes).

**Financial Relief Act, 1934****K279, 1934/119**

## CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 'V' (VICTORIA) PREFIX, 1924-64

B741

Recorded by: 1927-46 Investigation Branch, Victoria (CA 907)  
 1946-60 Commonwealth Investigation Service, Victoria  
 (CA 916)  
 1960-62 Commonwealth Police Force [II], District  
 Office, Victoria (CA 955)

Quantity: 29.7 metres (Melbourne)

Records in this series deal with the investigation of all criminal offences committed against the Commonwealth; the contravention of Commonwealth or State Acts committed on Commonwealth property; the pursuit of recalcitrant debtors to the Commonwealth; and inquiries into the whereabouts of individuals requested by government departments, private persons or organisations such as the Red Cross and the International Tracing Service, or by diplomatic or consular representation.

Investigations carried out at the request of government departments include matters such as narcotics trafficking, impersonation, bribery, 'forge and utter', ships' deserters, enemy aliens in wartime, prohibited immigrants, naturalisation, and sexual assault occurring on Commonwealth property. A separate file was generally raised for each case under investigation.

**Joseph Shelley (includes newspaper clipping of communist march in Cessnock), 1928-31****B741, V/2166****Unemployed Workers' Movement - demonstrations and interviews with Premier of Victoria, 1931****B741, V/8304****Relief workers' propaganda, 1932****B741, V/10022**

CORRESPONDENCE FILE, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'C' (COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS) PREFIX, 1929-50

A292

Recorded by: 1930-32 Department of Works and Railways [Central Office] (CA 14)  
 1932-38 Works and Services Branch [I], Canberra (CA 740)  
 1938-39 Department of Works [I], Central Office (CA 30)  
 1939-46 Works and Services Branch [II], Canberra (CA 742)  
 1946-49 Works Director, ACT (CA 743)

Quantity: 25.02 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment relief works, 1931** A292, C1348

This item consists of a memorandum from the Civic Administrator, FCT, to the Secretary, Department of Works requesting that the issue of food rations to the unemployed be replaced by the provision of relief work.

**Unemployment relief scheme - road of access to Westlake settlement, 1930-31** A292, C1728

This item indicates the level of bureaucratic delay in the provision of relief work in the FCT. In this case, it took over a year to organise relief work for 12 men for six weeks.

**Unemployment relief - Jervis Bay, 1931-32** A292, C1795

This item contains correspondence about the refurbishment of the Naval College at Jervis Bay by relief workers. Although £3 000 was allocated to the project from the Commonwealth unemployment relief grant of £250 000, the college was built on land ceded to the FCT and it was decided to spend the money by employing only Canberra artisans. An unemployed Jervis Bay carpenter who had formerly been employed at the college was refused work on the project in favour of a tradesman brought in from Canberra.

**Unemployed relief works, 1932-33** A292, C2832

**Unemployed relief - use of skilled men, 1933** A292, C4937

**Industrial - unemployment relief workers - allocation for work for the financial year, 1934** A292, C6118

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO STAFF, 'GA' PREFIX, 1931-40

MP304/1

Recorded by: 1931-40 General Post Office (also known as the Postmaster-General's Department, State Administration, 1901-75), Melbourne (CA 1034)

Quantity: 5 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains files recording all staff matters except appointments and promotions. It includes a number of individual special cases. The files were culled by the Postmaster-General's Department before they were transferred to Archives' custody.

**Financial Relief Act 1933 - adjustment of allowances, 1931-34** MP304/1, 1934/1946

'TEL' (TELEGRAPH?) REGISTER FILES, 1932-52

MP304/2

Recorded by: 1932-40 General Post Office (also known as the Postmaster-General's Department, State Administration, 1901-75), Melbourne (CA 1034)

Quantity: 5 metres (Melbourne)

This series was culled by the creating agency prior to its transfer to the National Archives. It consists of records created by the Postmaster-General's Department, Victoria.

Brisbane Unemployed Council,  
C/o Room 15,  
Trades Hall,  
Brisbane  
Feby. 13<sup>th</sup> 1931

Mr. G. H. Scullin, C502/3  
Prime Minister,  
Dear Sir,

I have been instructed to write you urging the necessity of immediately doing something for the relief of the unemployed. The Federal Aid Grant in this city has only given employment to 102 men as stated by the Ld. Mayor. People are becoming desperate, & it's time something was done. Christianity has failed, do not let us say that the Great Labour movement has, or is going to fail us too. The majority of workers still believe that our emancipation can be brought about by constitutional means. Let us not betray our trust, yours frat,  
Hy. Cleeton

An unhappy union man expresses his thoughts to Labor Prime Minister Scullin. NAA: A458, C502/3 part 2

### 3. THE PREMIERS' PLAN

Earlier in his career as Premier and Treasurer of Tasmania, Joseph Aloysius Lyons had followed orthodox economic advice with some success. In 1931, as Prime Minister, and faced with the complexity of the Great Depression, he sought the opinions of the few academic economists the nation possessed, as well as those of conservative businessmen. The advice he received stated:

Australia could do no more than mitigate the effects of the Depression until a rise in export prices and a resumption of capital inflow restored the nation's financial equilibrium... Budgets must be balanced, wage levels must fall in accordance with the fall in price levels, interest rates must be reduced, the exchange rate of the Australian pound with sterling must be allowed to depreciate, and a degree of controlled inflation should be used to ease the severe deflation.<sup>13</sup>

The opinion of J M Keynes was in marked contrast. When invited to comment on the Australian situation, Keynes wrote the following in the *Melbourne Herald*:

Every country in the world has the same problem as Australia in some shape or form. If each attempted to solve it by competitive wage reductions and competitive currency depreciations nobody would be better off. There is no exit along that route. Indeed, the tendency of wage reductions must necessarily be to rivet more securely the existing level of prices, for, in the long run, it is the wage level which mainly determines the price level, especially with currencies not rigidly linked to gold...

There is more chance of improving the profitableness of business by fostering enterprise and measures like public works than by further pressure on money wages, or further forcing exports. Problems of budget and unemployment are more pressing than balance of trade...

Above all, expand the internal bank credit and stimulate capital expenditure as much as courage and prudence allow. The substitution of wages for doles needs more credit, but not necessarily much more currency.<sup>14</sup>

But the Lyons Government formulated its policy according to the canons of orthodox finance. The deflationary principles of the Premiers' Plan were to be observed strictly. The Government would bide its time until events overseas produced a rise in export prices and stimulated Australia's economic revival. In the meantime there would be no extensive program of public works. The Government conceded that some relief work and sustenance would of necessity be provided for the unemployed, but the scale and cost of these measures would be minimised.

In April 1932 employment councils were established in each State following the handing down of the report from a committee of academic economists and businessmen established by the Commonwealth Government. These councils were to engage in detailed planning of relief measures while also ensuring that the works approved for this purpose were labour-intensive and financially self-liquidating, or 'reproductive'. The councils were to comprise representatives of both the State and Commonwealth governments. The exception was New South Wales where, as a consequence of that State's default on its interest payments, the council comprised Commonwealth officials only.

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<sup>13</sup> Hart, *op cit*, p. 66.

<sup>14</sup> *Melbourne Herald*, 25 May 1932.

In May the proclamation of the *Loan (Unemployment Relief Works) Act 1932* authorised the Commonwealth's expenditure of a total of £1 800 000 to provide relief work in the various States. In New South Wales the money was to be made available as a loan or grant to local government authorities. In the other States the money was made available to State Governments. In all cases money was to be released only for relief works approved by the employment councils which in turn had to obtain the approval of the respective State Treasurer, the Commonwealth Treasurer and the Commonwealth Bank. As Schedvin pointed out, this was a cumbersome system of control and, particularly as a consequence of the Commonwealth Bank's involvement, long delays were introduced before relief works could begin in the States.<sup>15</sup>

On 13 May 1932, on the basis that he had repeatedly flouted Commonwealth law, J T Lang was dismissed from office as Premier by the State Governor of New South Wales, Sir Philip Game. Lang submitted without demur. B S B Stevens, Leader of the Opposition in NSW, was called on by the Governor to form a government and at the State election held on 11 June 1932 Labor was resoundingly defeated.

On 7 September 1932 a Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Employment was established. Comprising four senior Federal public service officials and an academic economist, who was also Acting Commonwealth Statistician, the committee's function was to coordinate the work of the State employment councils. In particular it was to ensure that any relief work provided for the unemployed complied with the reproductivity criterion. Little money, however, was actually spent on relief works before the end of 1932.<sup>16</sup>

Of that parsimony, only minimal rates were to be paid to relief workers. On 22 August 1932 the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration suspended industrial awards for twelve months and directed that workers engaged in relief work should receive only the lowest rate of pay prescribed for any form of work. Any margin for skill, as prescribed in the original award, was additional. Relief work performed for Commonwealth departments or public authorities was paid at rates prescribed under section 23 of the *Unemployment Relief (Administration) Act 1932*.

When asked in the House of Representatives on 2 November 1932 whether there was any likelihood of funds being specially granted to provide relief work for the unemployed prior to Christmas, the Prime Minister continued the fiction that the Commonwealth, while maintaining a financial interest in the funds provided, would delegate responsibility to the State Governments for the actual welfare of the nation's unemployed. He announced:

No special arrangements for the granting of unemployment relief during the Christmas season were made at the recent Premiers' Conference, because it was considered that the works programmes of the States would meet the needs of the unemployed for the whole of the financial year.

...But the actual expenditure for the first three months of the financial year has been less than was expected, so that the States may now spend money more freely, and, if necessary, provide specially for the Christmas period.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Schedvin, *op cit*, p. 338.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 338.

<sup>17</sup> House of Representatives *Hansard*, 2 November 1932, Government Printer, Canberra, FCT, vol. 136, p. 1 755.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1899-1939	A458
Recorded by: 1923-34 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)	
Quantity: 49.77 metres (Canberra)	
This series was described in Chapter 1.	
<b>Unemployment relief grants - awards, conditions and rates of pay, 1931-32</b>	<b>A458, AQ502/3</b>
This item contains a letter of 30 August 1932 from the East Sydney branch of the Australian Labor Party to the Prime Minister, protesting that relief workers were being engaged at rates lower than the Federal award.	
<b>1932 grant for the relief of unemployment preference to returned soldiers, 1932</b>	<b>A458, O502/8</b>
This item deals with complaints from the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia that unemployed returned soldiers were no longer receiving preference in the provision of relief work from Commonwealth funds in various States. The Government replied that the funds were provided for the relief of unemployment generally and could not be confined to one class of recipient. The item also contains allegations of preferential treatment in the distribution of relief work in Corrimal, NSW.	
<b>Industrial - unemployment relief grant 1932 - method of engaging labour, 1932</b>	<b>A458, Q502/8</b>
This item deals with complaints by industrial unions of inequity in the engagement of men on projects funded by a Commonwealth grant for the relief of unemployment.	
<b>Unemployment relief funds in Australia, 1932-33</b>	<b>A458, BA502/3</b>
This item details the expenditure and administration of unemployment relief funds throughout Australia. The data was collected from the Commonwealth Treasury and from State premiers in response to a request for information from the Government of South Africa.	
<b>Unemployment relief - general - part 3, 1932-34</b>	<b>A458, C502/3 part 3</b>
This item contains an extensive collection of unsolicited letters from individuals suggesting various schemes to the Prime Minister to solve the unemployment problem.	
<b>Unemployed migrants - requests for repatriation, part 1, 1926-31</b>	<b>A458, Q154/19</b>
<b>Unemployed relief grant, 1932 - preference to Australian materials, 1932-33</b>	<b>A458, P502/8</b>
<b>Unemployed relief - drill halls and shelters for unemployed, 1923-32</b>	<b>A458, AC502/3</b>
<b>Winter relief - unemployed soldiers, 1933</b>	<b>A458, BB230/16</b>
<b>Postal concessions for unemployed, 1932-33</b>	<b>A458, BG502/3</b>

## GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1901-39

MP273/1

Recorded by: 1901-39 Postmaster-General's Department, Central Administration (CA 9)

Quantity: 49.14 metres (Melbourne)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Leave on furlough where the provision of additional assistance for relief is not involved, 1931**

MP273/1, 1931/5030

## FOLDERS OF CABINET PAPERS, 1901-41

A6006

Recorded by: 1976-81 Australian Archives, Central Office (CA 1720)  
1981-94 Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office (CA 3196)  
1994 National Archives of Australia, National Office (CA 7970)

Quantity: 9.18 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in each State office; microfilm (all offices of the Archives)

This series is more fully described in Chapter 1. It was created by the National Archives of Australia (formerly the Australian Archives) to make access to Cabinet documents easier. It contains Cabinet papers, submissions and other material originally copied from departmental files.

Details of parent files are provided at the foot of the entries for each paper.

**Special unemployment relief grant - Funding - Defence works, Darwin, 1932**

A6006, 1932/12/31

This item contains a memorandum from the Department of the Interior advising that £5 000 had been allotted to the Northern Territory and Central Australia as a special grant to provide relief work for the unemployed. It was proposed to spend 50% of the money on landing strips in Darwin and Katherine, with the balance going towards roadworks in Central Australia.

**Parent item**

A659, 1942/1/7721

## CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES (THIRD SYSTEM), 1901-50

A461

Recorded by: 1934-50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 143.82 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment relief - Federal Capital Territory, 1930-34**

A461, F351/1/7

This item includes a *Canberra Times* report from 19 September 1932 about a meeting of more than 100 unemployed Canberra men. The meeting resolved that 'working for the dole be eliminated and work substituted.' Another resolution carried was that:

... the utter misery now being felt by Canberra unemployed should be brought under the notice of the Government. The

sustenance obtained from relief work, viz. one week in every three barely works out at 25/- per week for married men and one week in six for single men means 10/- per week, which, together with the high cost of living existing at Canberra, makes it an utter impossibility for a mere existence.

A Hansard report from 23 May 1932 records that the Minister for the Interior informed Parliament that unemployment relief work in the FCT was available only to applicants who had been resident in the Territory during the period December to June 1929-30.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - Victoria, 1932-38**

**A461, F351/1/9**

This item describes a farm labourers' scheme providing single unemployed men with work on farming properties. Under the scheme the Victorian Government granted a subsidy to rural landowners who gave work to unemployed single men.

The item also contains a report of the Victorian Employment Council from September 1932 noting that the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration had decided to suspend industrial awards for 12 months from 22 August 1932. The court directed that men employed on relief work were to be paid at an hourly rate equivalent to the lowest rate of pay prescribed for any work plus any margin for skill prescribed by the awards. In the case of men engaged on unemployment relief works by the Crown or any government department or public authority, the rates of pay were those prescribed under section 23 of the *Unemployment Relief (Administration) Act 1932* and were subject to cost-of-living adjustments.

**Unemployment - Christmas relief, 1932-38**

**A461, G351/1/7 part 1**

This item contains an extract from Hansard (2 November 1932) in which Prime Minister Lyons informed Parliament that the Commonwealth Government did not need to organise any special relief for the unemployed prior to Christmas.

The item also deals with the grant of £30 000 for relief works in the Federal Capital Territory and the provision of £100 000 to the States as Christmas relief for the unemployed. From this amount, a further £10 000 was set aside for expenditure in Canberra.

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 2, 1931-34**

**A461, D321/1/1 part 2**

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 3, 1934-39**

**A461, D321/1/1 part 3**

**Sales tax - materials purchased for unemployed relief work, 1932-33**

**A461, C344/4/6**

BILL FILES, 1901-97

A2863

Recorded by: 1901-70 Attorney-General's Department Central Office  
(CA 5)  
1970 Office of Parliamentary Counsel (CA 2965)

Quantity: 330.84 metres (Canberra); 118 metres (Sydney)

This series consists of files containing manuscript drafts, proof and final copies (with manuscript amendments) of Bills as at their first, second and third readings. It also contains correspondence about the preparation of Bills.



***Loan (Unemployment Relief Works) Act 1932*****A2863, 1932/9**

This item contains a statement made by the Prime Minister to the press on 20 April 1932, referring to a conference of Commonwealth Government ministers and State premiers at which it was decided to continue with the deflationary measures of the Premiers' Plan.

The item also deals with the distribution of a special winter relief grant of £2 400 000 among all the States, except NSW. Since the NSW Government had defaulted on its internal and external interest payments, no amount could – or would – be raised by the Loan Council on its behalf. It then deals with the arrangements subsequently made by the Commonwealth Government to provide relief work for the unemployed in NSW.

**CHRISTMAS RELIEF WORK.**

The construction of new footways is now well in hand in Hunter-street, Petersham.

**Christmas relief work.** *National Library of Australia: Plate 284*  
(*photograph from the Sydney Morning Herald, 22 December 1932*)

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903-38	A1
Recorded by: 1903-16 Department of External Affairs [I], Melbourne (CA 7)	
1916-28 Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (CA 15)	
1928-32 Department of Home Affairs [II], (Central Office) (CA 24)	
1932-38 Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)	
Quantity: 454.65 metres (Canberra)	
This series was described in Chapter 1.	
<b>Rations for travelling unemployed - returned soldiers whose cases are under consideration by the Repatriation Commission, 1931-32</b>	<b>A1, 1931/3126</b>
<b>Rations to unemployed returned soldiers drawing pensions, 1931-32</b>	<b>A1, 1931/6152</b>
<b>Free bus transport to school for children of the unemployed, 1931-32</b>	<b>A1, 1931//8106</b>
<b>Unemployment and relief work - Canberra, 1931-35</b>	<b>A1, 1935/2405</b>
This item contains information about the Australian Youths' Settlement League, a body that had sent young men for training on experimental farms established by the New South Wales Government. By 1932, because of its own circumstances, the State Government could not continue to be so generous.	
The item deals in some depth with the hardships experienced by the unemployed following a curtailment of relief work projects undertaken in the FCT. It covers the provision of work relief to married and single men and the distribution of rations. The item also contains an article from the <i>Canberra Times</i> of 4 April 1932, complaining that the unemployed of the FCT were receiving little more than promises of 'sympathetic consideration' from the Commonwealth Government.	
<b>Unemployment relief loan, 1932-35</b>	<b>A1, 1935/3349</b>
This item contains a memorandum from the Prime Minister's Department to the Department of the Interior reporting that the Premiers' Conference had decided to provide £600 000 for relief work in New South Wales.	
<b>'Deputation' to Minister - Pine Creek and Darwin - by Northern Australia Workers' Union and unemployed, 1935</b>	<b>A1, 1935/9282</b>

DEFENCE ARMY SERIES (401), 1912-45

MP729/6

Recorded by: 1936-39 Department of Defence [II], Central Administration (CA 19)  
 1939-45 Department of the Army, Central Office (CA 36)

Quantity: 26.3 metres (Melbourne)

This series consists of correspondence files maintained by Army Headquarters between 1936 and 1945.

**Railways - roads (project for unemployment relief), 1934-37** MP729/6, 41/401/17

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1912-64

SP459/1

Recorded by: 1912-21 Second Military District, New South Wales [I] (CA 6335)  
 1921-39 Second District Base, Australian Military Forces, New South Wales (CA 4334)  
 1939-42 Headquarters, Eastern Command [I], Australian Military Forces (CA 1876)

Quantity: 65 metres (Sydney)

Records in this series contain correspondence about the administration, function and policy of Eastern Command, including accounts; ammunition; Victoria Barracks; camps; casualties; compensation; clothing; establishments; and provisions and stores.

**Liverpool Camp - housing of unemployed, 1931-32** SP459/1, 518/2/1303

CENTRAL REGISTRY SERIES - RIFLE RANGES AND TRAINING DEPOTS, 1913-62

MP1142/1

Recorded by: 1913-21 Department of Defence [I] (CA 6)  
 1921-24 Department of Defence [II], Central Administration (CA 19)  
 1924-39 Army Headquarters, Department of Defence [II] (CA 2671)  
 1939-60 Department of the Army, Central Office (CA 36)  
 1960-62 Army Headquarters, Department of the Army, Melbourne (CA 2585)

Quantity: 9 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains administrative and correspondence records about rifle ranges, drill halls and training depots.

**Hurstville drill hall - use for unemployment relief, 1931-32** MP1142/1, 55/130/22

**Rifle range, Williamstown - reconstruction work by unemployed, 1932-33** MP1142/1, 310/15/466

CENTRAL REGISTRY SERIES CONCERNING RIFLE RANGES AND TRAINING  
DEPOTS, 1913-62

MT1461/1

Recorded by: 1913-21 Department of Defence [I] (CA 6)  
 1921-24 Department of Defence [II], Central  
 Administration (CA 19)  
 1924-39 Army Headquarters, Department of Defence [II]  
 (CA 2671)

Quantity: 10.62 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains administrative records about rifle ranges and training depots.

**Unauthorised use of Adamstown Rifle Range by unemployed, 1930-32**

MT1461/1, 310/66/212

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'G' (GENERAL) PREFIX,  
1913-39

A430

Recorded by: 1930-32 Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Branch,  
 Department of Home Affairs [II] (CA 756)  
 1932-39 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department  
 of the Interior [I] (CA 757)  
 1939-51 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department  
 of the Interior [II] (CA 757)

Quantity: 4.14 metres (Canberra)

This series is described in Chapter 1.

**Canberra Unemployment Relief Fund Committee - general matters, 1930-32**

A430, G180

This item contains correspondence between the Canberra Unemployment Relief Fund Committee, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Department of Home Affairs, FCT Branch, and the Department of Works about the allocation of funds and the organisation of relief work for Canberra's unemployed.

The item also contains a report from the Civic Administrator to the Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs, Canberra. This is largely a repetition of an earlier report on unemployment in the FCT which can be found in A1, 1935/2405.

## CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'E' PREFIX, 1914-34

A6272

Recorded by: 1930-32 Federal Capital Territory Branch, Department  
 of Home Affairs [II] (CA 756)  
 1932-39 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department  
 of the Interior [I] (CA 757)  
 1939-51 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department  
 of the Interior [II] (CA 757)

Quantity: 1.44 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment relief works – reconstruction of portion between Canberra Avenue and State Circuit, 1931–32** A6272, E434

This item deals with the Federal Capital Territory's share of a £250 000 Commonwealth grant to the States to provide relief work for the unemployed.

**Special relief measures for unemployed persons in the Federal Capital Territory prior to Christmas, 1930–31** A6272, E175

**Blankets for unemployed from Commissariat Stores, 1929–31** A6272, E202

**Firewood supplies for unemployed, 1930–34** A6272, E227

**Unemployed workmen – miscellaneous matters, including accommodation and various general complaints, criticisms and demonstrations, 1930–31** A6272, E301

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 'G' SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1918–74 A2421

Recorded by: 1929–52 Repatriation Commission [II], Registry (CA 225)

Quantity: 110.25 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 2.

**Unemployment relief grant, 1931–33** A2421, G854 part 1

This item contains an application by the Repatriation Department for unemployed relief work funds. It includes a schedule of refurbishment works in NSW considered suitable for the employment of relief workers.

GENERAL POLICY FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'G' PREFIX, 1918– D2048

Recorded by: 1918–20 Deputy Comptroller of Repatriation, South Australia (CA 3153)  
1920–65 Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation, South Australia (CA 877)

Quantity: 14.04 metres (Adelaide)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Living and compassionate allowances, 1929–53** D2048, G828 part 5

**Restorations Financial Relief Act 1933, 1931–1954** D2084, G952

**Office accommodation and rented premises (permission to erect flood light, stocktaking, general maintenance of buildings, unemployment relief work, rents payable, hired properties etc), 1927–54** D2048, G206 part 4

**Unemployment Relief Council, 1932–34** D2048, G960

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES – POLICY AND GENERAL – 'G' PREFIX, 1921–68 SP948/1

Recorded by: 1921–68 Deputy Commissioner for Repatriation, New South Wales (CA 875)

Quantity: 63 metres (Sydney)

Records in this series contain correspondence on a variety of subjects, including disclosure of information; registers of medical

practitioners; use of departmental facilities by outside organisations; building alterations and repairs; stocktaking; and policy.

**Employed and Unemployed Ex-Servicemen's Association, 1934**

**SP948/1, G764**

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1922-97

K279

Recorded by: 1922-32 Public Works Branch, Western Australia (CA 760)  
1932-46 Works and Services Branch, Western Australia (CA 971)

Quantity: 175 metres (Perth)

Records in this series deal with a diverse range of activities undertaken by the Public Works Branch and its successors in Western Australia. The records contain correspondence, designs drawings, contracts, minutes and press releases.

Matters dealt with include administrative, finance and tender and quotation procedures; contract conditions; material specifications; instructions on the engagement of consultants; fire protection policy and standards; standard specifications and requirements of State and Commonwealth instrumentalities; and project files on various construction projects (including War Service Homes).

**Financial Relief Act, 1934**

**K279, 1934/119**

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 'DP' PREFIX, 1928-55

E68

Recorded by: 1946-54 Crown Law Office, North Australia (CA 885)

Quantity: 8.1 metres (Darwin)

This series is currently being researched. Early indications of its content indicate that its records are generally about policy matters.

**Poor persons' legal assistance ordinance - draft legislation correspondence, 1927-37**

**E68, DP331**

CORRESPONDENCE, CIRCULARS, ETC ON ADMINISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL AWARDS AND OTHER CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, 1929-32

CP942/2

Recorded by: 1929-30 Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)  
1930-32 Department of Works and Railways, Central Office (CA 14)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of one file:

**Copies of correspondence and circulars - unemployed relief - industrial officer's file, 1929-32**

**CP942/2, bundle 1**

CORRESPONDENCE FILE, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'C' (COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS) PREFIX, 1929-50

A292

Recorded by: 1930-32 Department of Works and Railways [Central Office] (CA 14)  
1932-38 Works and Services Branch [I], Canberra (CA 740)

Quantity: 25.02 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment relief, 1932**

A292, C2993

This item contains a letter from the Canberra Chamber of Commerce to the Minister for the Interior suggesting that the local unemployed should be given relief work prior to Christmas by constructing a recreation ground in the vicinity of Black Mountain and repairing government-owned cottages, many of which were reported to be in poor repair.

**Unemployment relief - Canberra, 1932**

A292, C2028

This item contains a response from the Minister for Home Affairs to a parliamentary question in the House of Representatives on 3 March 1932, about unemployed single men who had settled more or less permanently in rest camps established for the travelling unemployed in the Federal Capital Territory. The Minister stated:

It is not...proposed to continue supplying rations to these men while they occupy the camps to the exclusion of bona fide travelling unemployed who desire to use the buildings as a rest camp.

**Canberra aerodrome - general - a) unemployment relief works - b) minor jobs and maintenance work, 1932-39**

A292, C16170

This item contains departmental correspondence about the expenditure of £1 000 on the development of the Canberra Aerodrome. The money had been provided by the New South Wales unemployment relief fund.

**Industrial - unemployment relief workers - allocation for work for end financial year, 1934**

A292, C6118

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SERIES (ARMY HEADQUARTERS), 1939-42

MP508/1

Recorded by: 1939 Army Headquarters, Department of Defence [II] (CA 2671)

Quantity: 133 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains files about the wartime administration of the Australian Military Forces. Papers on these files prior to 1939 were registered under systems in use in the Department of Defence.

**Purpose recondition of the Sutherland-Liverpool Road and Christmas relief to the unemployed, 1931-41**

MP508/1, 289/701/300

#### 4. THE POLICY OF 'PRUDENT FINANCE'

Fears of runaway inflation and a new balance of payments crisis limited the amount of money that the Commonwealth Government was willing to raise for the provision of relief for the unemployed in 1933.

It was estimated that with around 480 000 Australians unemployed, some £50 000 000 would be required to provide full-time work for half the number of the jobless. However, the Government's adherence to a policy of 'prudent finance' meant that only £5 800 000 was spent on relief works. Since sustenance rates were considerably lower than the rates paid to relief workers, more people received the dole in the period 1932-34 than were given employment on relief works.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly, the funding of relief works was inadequate. To make matters worse, because relief works were required to be of a reproductive nature, delays in the distribution of funding for relief programs continued. In April 1933 Melbourne's *Age* newspaper reported that of £7 000 000 allocated to relief works in Victoria, some £4 600 000 remained to be claimed. In late June 1933 the Queensland Government reported on the relief work it had carried out, which was mostly road and drainage projects using only basic materials and – since it involved heavy manual labouring – the use of little skill or machinery.

It was difficult, however, to find suitable reproductive work in the urban areas where most unemployed workers were located. Governments had resorted to small-scale work relief projects such as land settlement and mineral prospecting by individuals and small groups of men. While ostensibly reproductive, these types of projects were of dubious value for the large numbers of urban unemployed.

Early in October 1933 unemployed workers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) complained that insufficient funds were being allocated for relief work. The Department of the Interior responded by noting that measures adopted in the FCT compared favourably with those of the States. On 25 October 1933, however, Prime Minister Lyons told Parliament that the Commonwealth Government was doubling the amount of money from revenue for relief works and was – for the first time in two years – providing money from loan funds.

According to the Prime Minister, a total of £2 500 000 was available and because most of it was earmarked for funding relief works, he called on State Governments to expedite their works programs. On 2 November 1933, the Commonwealth Government reminded the Premier of South Australia that his State's allocation of funds under the *Federal Aid Roads Act 1926* had not been fully used. Western Australia was reminded in similar fashion on 8 November 1933.

By November 1933 a note of optimism began to appear in official pronouncements. On 8 November 1933, Melbourne's *Sun Pictorial* reported the Prime Minister's observation that economic conditions were generally better than at any time since the beginning of the Depression. The *Argus* newspaper reported him as saying that because business generally was much better than it had been, the outlook for Christmas 1933 was by far the brightest it had been for several years. On 7 November 1933, the *Melbourne Herald* reported the Prime Minister as saying that no special Commonwealth grant to alleviate unemployment prior to Christmas was needed. This would be the first 'employed Christmas' for several years, the

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<sup>18</sup> Schedvin, *op cit*, pp. 335, 339 and statistical table, p. 340.



Prime Minister said, and Commonwealth officials had been instructed to 'push on' with all proposals for relief works; no doubt, he added, State Governments would accelerate their works programs. With a general revival in trade discernible at least in Melbourne, the Commonwealth Government anticipated that private enterprise would employ increasing numbers of people.

Lyons' political biographer has characterised the United Australia Party (UAP) Government as an 'administration of conservative orthodoxies' pursuing policies that could provide only limited amelioration of unemployment.<sup>19</sup> In accordance with that orthodoxy the Prime Minister, in a broadcast address to the nation on 8 November 1933, referred to that section of opinion that advocated 'stupendous' programs of public works to stimulate the economy by injecting funds from the wages of workers employed by the programs. Such large scale public works, he observed, would entail borrowing on a level that must harm the Australian economy.

In his study of Australia's experience of the Great Depression, Schedvin was critical of the conflict between the Loan Council, the Commonwealth Bank and the private banks, which stymied efforts to reduce unemployment:

At the highest level the centre of the stage was occupied by a debate on the means rather than the end of financing relief works, and the urgent task of reducing unemployment was pushed into the background.<sup>20</sup>

The tenor of that debate is apparent in an article in the *Argus*, the voice of conservative orthodoxy, of 8 November 1933, which protested that the Loan Council could not be directed and would not be restrained. The *Argus* was of the opinion that the Commonwealth Bank's reluctance to make funds available for relief works indicated that more profitable uses could be found for those funds and that:

...there can be no doubt whatever that political influences are still at work; that the [Commonwealth Bank] board is asked to sanction loans so that Parliaments, to ease a political situation, may have the privilege of spending them; and that loans find their way into unemployment relief works that Ministries may be able to meet criticism of the measures that have been taken to relieve unemployment.

The newspaper complained that an 'unbusinesslike confusion' reigned in the selection of relief works that could, and could not, be considered reproductive. As for the 'vicious theory' that the circulation of money was good for the community, the *Argus* thought the Government would do better to leave it in the hands of those best able to make use of it. On 8 November 1933 the *Melbourne Age* also carried an article critical of taxpayer-funded schemes to provide work for the relief of the unemployed. Schemes such as these, the paper considered, had been necessary in a time of crisis but they had now served their purpose. Though preferable to an 'unearned charity dole', relief work was wasteful and no better than a hand-to-mouth expedient.

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<sup>19</sup> Hart, *op cit*, pp. 235 and 261.

<sup>20</sup> Schedvin, *op cit*, p. 329.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903-38	A1
Recorded by: 1903-16 Department of External Affairs [I], Melbourne (CA 7)	
1916-28 Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (CA 15)	
1928-32 Department of Home Affairs [II], (Central Office) (CA 24)	
1932-38 Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)	
Quantity: 454.65 metres (Canberra)	
This series was described in Chapter 1.	
<b>Clothing for the unemployed in Canberra, 1930-32</b>	<b>A1, 1932/3478</b>
<b>Unemployed relief - FCT - suggested elimination of rations and provision of work, 1932</b>	<b>A1, 1932/3786</b>
<b>Unemployment and relief work, Canberra, 1931-35</b>	<b>A1, 1935/2405</b>
This item deals with the provision of relief work for Canberra's unemployed prior to Christmas 1933.	
<b>Ration relief to unemployed - general administration, part 2, 1931-38</b>	<b>A1, 1936/191</b>
CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1901-50	A461
Recorded by: 1934-50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)	
Quantity: 143.82 metres (Canberra)	
This series was described in Chapter 1.	
<b>Conferences - Commonwealth and State Ministers - Premiers' Conference, June 1933</b>	<b>A461, AM326/1/3</b>
This item contains a transcript of the proceedings of, and the decisions made by, a conference of Commonwealth and State representatives held in Melbourne in June 1933. It includes a memorandum prepared by Sir Herbert Gepp that advocated gold mining as a way of absorbing large numbers of unemployed.	
<b>Schemes for relief of unemployment - South Australia, 1925-39</b>	<b>A461, D351/1/9</b>
This item contains a telegram sent by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Employment to the Unemployment Relief Council of Adelaide in December 1933, which reveals that the unemployment situation remained dire and relief measures parsimonious:	
<p>...number of persons including children in receipt of sustenance at thirtieth June 1933 New South Wales 202980 Victoria 95800 Queensland 21932 Western Australia 19373 Tasmania 7581 rate paid to adults in New South Wales for work in lieu of sustenance 18/10 per fortnight Victoria 5/9 per week if no work performed 10/- per week in cash if work performed Queensland 10/- per week no work 13/6 to 17/10 if working Western Australia 7/- Tasmania 6/- worth of rations if not working 7/6 in cash if work done.</p>	

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - Tasmania, 1932-37****A461, E351/1/9**

This item deals in great depth with developments at home and abroad in providing 'reproductive' relief work for the unemployed. It also provides considerable statistical information about work relief programs, work-for-rations and other schemes, and Commonwealth and State Government expenditure on the provision of relief.

It contains a letter from the Prime Minister's Department to the Premier of Tasmania which was accompanied by both general and specific information about overseas and domestic solutions to provide work relief for the unemployed. In Belgium, for example, the unemployed were engaged in intensive cultivation of vegetable allotments; in the United Kingdom, slum clearance was under way; and Germany was repairing and renewing its railway lines and rolling stock.

The situation was not dissimilar in Australia. For example, after 18 months' activity, the Boys Employment League in Perth, WA had managed to place 1 700 boys in rural and 450 boys in urban employment; in Victoria the unemployed were settled on the land to engage in fruit and vegetable growing, poultry raising, mixed farming and dairying; and in South Australia the unemployed were clearing land for agricultural purposes.

**Unemployment relief - Federal Capital Territory, 1930-34****A461, F351/1/7**

This item contains a petition received personally by the Governor-General, Sir Isaac Isaacs, on 23 September 1933 and passed to the Prime Minister. Its contents indicate that impatience with delays in the provision of relief work was not confined to the States.

The Government's response was that its measures for the relief of unemployment in Canberra compared more than favourably with those made by State Governments.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - Victoria, 1932-38****A461, F351/1/9**

This item contains an article from the *Age* of 20 April 1933. Under the heading 'Relief Works, Speeding up Needed, £7 000 000 allocated but only £4 600 000 claimed', the newspaper complained of a delay between the allocation and the expenditure of loan moneys specially raised to provide work for the unemployed.

The file includes a report from the Employment Council of Victoria for the quarter to March 1933, which noted that a work in return for sustenance scheme had been introduced in July 1932. The report provides some statistics about the number of unemployed registered in metropolitan Melbourne by the end of March 1933.

**Unemployment - Christmas relief, 1932-38****A461, G351/1/7 part 1**

This item provides an insight into the differing views held about relief work programs.

It includes an extract from the House of Representatives Hansard for 25 October 1933, in which Prime Minister Lyons was asked a question about the granting of funds to local government to provide the unemployed with relief work prior to Christmas. The Prime Minister responded that approximately £2 500 000 would be

granted to the States by the Commonwealth Government. With the Parliament's approval, he added, a portion of that sum could be utilised prior to Christmas but the Government did not intend to make grants to local governing bodies.

The item also deals with the lack of relief work provided for the thousands of unemployed women and girls. In answer to a question in the House of Representatives about this matter, the Acting Leader of the House responded that this was a matter for the States and that some of the States were dilatory in their disbursement of relief money.

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 2, 1931-34** A461, D321/1/1 part 2

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 3, 1934-39** A461, D321/1/1 part 3

**Sales tax - materials purchased for unemployed relief work, 1932-33** A461, C344/4/6

DEFENCE ARMY SERIES (401), 1912-45 MP729/6

Recorded by: 1936-39 Department of Defence [II], Central Administration (CA 19)  
1939-45 Department of the Army, Central Office (CA 36)

Quantity: 26.3 metres (Melbourne)

This series consists of correspondence files maintained by Army Headquarters between 1936 and 1945.

**Railways - roads - project for unemployment relief, 1934-37** MP729/6, 41/401/17

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, VARIABLE ALPHABETICAL PREFIX AND GENERAL PREFIX 'SC', 1914-50 A1608

Recorded by: 1939-45 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 20.79 metres (Canberra)

Files in this series primarily deal with the way in which war affected public life, national security, and Government policy and administration. However, some records in A1608 also cover the distribution of old military clothing and boots to the unemployed during the Depression.

**Unemployment relief - applications for military clothing and equipment, 1930-33** A1608, C27/2/1 part 1

This item contains a letter from the Shire Clerk, Bulli Shire Council, requesting assistance in the provision of warm clothing for the unemployed of the Bulli area and their families. The letter, which was addressed to the local Federal member, read in part as follows:

The unemployed position in this Shire, as you no doubt know, is very acute, as there are approximately 4,000 unemployed registered in the Shire, and of these many have not worked for three four or five years. It will readily be seen that none of these unfortunate people are in a position to provide themselves and their families with warm clothing.

This letter was forwarded to the Prime Minister's Department and sent to the Defence Department, which later provided a list of part-worn or unserviceable articles of military clothing handed over to

the New South Wales State Government during the previous 16 months for distribution to the unemployed.

JOB FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1917-37

J618

Recorded by: 1917-32 Public Works Branch, Brisbane (CA 3759)  
1932-37 Works and Services Branch, Brisbane  
(CA 967)

Quantity: 4.5 metres (Brisbane)

Records in this series deal with the construction and maintenance of Commonwealth Government buildings in various parts of Queensland between 1917 and 1937. They contain general correspondence, building plans, site plans, reports and requisitions.

Unemployment relief works (3 files), 1931-35

J618, 34/40

NO. .... MEMORANDUM for -

The Secretary,  
Department of Home Affairs,  
CANBERRA, F.C.T.

28 NOV 1930 A.M.

Ration Relief.

It is thought that you would appreciate a report concerning a case which came under notice this week. A family, resident at Causeway, is in necessitous circumstances. The husband has been away from Canberra a month. He left to secure work in a saw mill in Gippsland. Contracts for timber supplies having been cancelled, the saw mill did not commence operations, and, so far as his wife is aware, he is in Victoria still in search of other employment. The wife is left in Canberra with four young children and with no resources. An offer of rations was made, but she indicated she had enough food to feed the family that evening and the following morning. If word came from her husband by mail the following day that he had work, she preferred not to accept rations but to eke out future wages in maintenance and the gradual payment of debts.

The husband has not since written that he has work, and rations have been issued.

*See letter underneath.*

*See.*

*28.11.30*

*H. R. Waterman*  
(H. R. Waterman)  
for Civic Administrator.

Men had to travel to find work, leaving their families to manage as best they could, November 1930. NAA: A1, 1930/5912

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1919-42	B1535
Recorded by: 1930-39 Army Headquarters, Department of Defence [II], Victoria (CA 2671)	
1939 Department of the Army, Central Office (CA 36)	
Quantity: 46 metres (Melbourne)	
This series was described in Chapter 1.	
<b>Establishment of training camps for unemployed men, 1934-35</b>	<b>B1535, 725/1/23</b>
<b>Unemployment relief - distribution of surplus military clothing, 1932</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/47</b>
<b>Clothing and boots for unemployed, 1932</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/102</b>
<b>Boots for unemployed Hobart, 1933</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/109</b>
<b>Loan of stores for relief of unemployed, 1930-38</b>	<b>B1535, 734/12/309</b>
<b>Permanent military forces - effect of the Financial Relief Act 1934, 1933-34</b>	<b>B1535, 856/2/172</b>
<b>Financial Relief Act, 1935</b>	<b>B1535, 856/2/193</b>
<b>Henry Head - Defence reserve - unemployed camps, 1930-38</b>	<b>B1535, 869/3/503</b>
<b>Nobby's, Newcastle, NSW - unemployed camping area, 1930-39</b>	<b>B1535, 869/3/656</b>
<b>Broadmeadows Camp - engineers' depot, Alexandra - use by unemployed, 1930-31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/4/88</b>
<b>Use of Blackboy Hill Camp, WA for unemployed, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/6/7</b>
<b>Defence Department provision towards relief for unemployed, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/20</b>
<b>Blankets, tents and equipment for use of unemployed, 1928-30</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/27</b>
<b>Use of drill hall, Grattan Street, Carlton by unemployed, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/34</b>
<b>Drill Hall, Hurstville - unemployment relief, 1931-32</b>	<b>B1535, 869/14/110</b>
<b>Rutherford Camp - application for use by unemployed and use by persons affected by flood, 1931-32</b>	<b>B1535, 869/25/194</b>
<b>Liverpool Camp - use by unemployed, 1930-34</b>	<b>B1535, 869/25/249</b>
<b>Victoria Barracks, Brisbane - use by unemployed homeless girls, 1930</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/107</b>
<b>Use of Defence buildings for unemployed women and girls, Sydney, 1930-31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/132</b>
<b>Application for the use of Victoria Barracks, Sydney for use of unemployed, 1930-31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/197</b>
<b>General application for use of drill halls (no specific drill hall) by unemployed, 1925-31</b>	<b>B1535, 869/30/219</b>

- Grattan Street Drill Hall (and other drill halls) – use by unemployed, 1930–32** B1535, 869/30/267
- Compulsory military training – *Labor Daily* cuttings, 1933** B1535, 929/19/41
- Unemployed members of militia units attending camps, 1932–38** B1535, 929/19/998

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ALPHABETICAL SERIES, 1921–70 A981

Recorded by: 1927–42 Department of External Affairs [II], Central Office (CA 18)

Quantity: 147 metres (Canberra)

Some of the pre-1925 material contained in this correspondence series was created by the Department of Home Affairs which handled External Affairs matters between 1916 and 1921.

Until 1934, most of the series was created while External Affairs activities were conducted by a semi-autonomous branch of the Prime Minister's Department. In 1935 the Department of External Affairs [II] was separated administratively from the Prime Minister's Department and the series continued unchanged until 1942.

**ILO unemployment insurance and relief for unemployed, 1933–37**

A981, INT 277

This item provides details of the provision of relief for the unemployed in NSW, Tasmania and Victoria. The information was provided to the Prime Minister's Department by the premiers of those States.

CORRESPONDENCE FILE, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'C' (COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS) PREFIX, 1929–50 A292

Recorded by: 1930–32 Department of Works and Railways, Central Office (CA 14)  
1932–38 Works and Services Branch [I], Canberra (CA 740)  
1938–39 Department of Works [I], Central Office (CA 30)

Quantity: 25.02 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment relief funds, 1933**

A292, C3557

This item contains correspondence in which it was suggested that some 20 unemployed young Canberra women in receipt of food rations could be found casual work as trainee housemaids or waitresses. The cost of their wages, which would not exceed the value of their food ration, would be met from unemployment relief funds.

**Unemployment relief work – use of skilled labour, 1933**

A292, C4881

This item contains a resolution passed by the Advisory Council on 3 October 1933 and directed to the Minister of the Interior. The resolution contained the suggestion that better use should be made of skilled labour in the provision of relief work for the

unemployed. On 20 October 1933 the Works and Services Branch of the Department of the Interior responded that:

...provision is made on the Unemployment Relief Programme for certain building works which, in conjunction with the provision for new architectural works on the Estimates, will absorb skilled men of the building trades. It is, however, impracticable to provide work for other skilled workers, including clerks, the number of which is comparatively small. Every endeavour is, however, made to place men on work with due respect to any relative skill which they may have.

**Parks and Gardens Section - unemployment relief works -  
Black Mountain Quarry - screen, 1933-34**

**A292, C5690**

This item contains details of unemployment relief work carried out in July 1933. Under the supervision of the Parks and Gardens Section of the Department of the Interior, the work involved the excavation and screening of rock from Black Mountain Quarry in the Federal Capital Territory.

**Industrial - unemployment relief workers - allocation for work  
for the financial year, 1934**

**A292, C6118**

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1930-59

A2942

Recorded by: 1930-59 Advisory Council (from 1938, Australian  
Capital Territory Advisory Council) (CA 491)

Quantity: 1 metre (Canberra)

Records in this series contain extracts from meetings of the ACT Advisory Council; correspondence about meetings and decisions made by the council; and copies of ACT ordinances, questions, resolutions and draft regulations.

**Rations to unemployed, 1931-34**

**A2942, 125**

**Commissariat section - training of unemployed girls, 1933**

**A2942, 339**





## 5. THE NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF PLAN

On 22 January 1934, the Unemployment Relief Council of Adelaide reported that, with business reporting an improved turnover, Christmas 1933 had been the best for several years. The problem of unemployment, however, remained unsolved. In New South Wales, for example, while the number of those in receipt of food rations decreased by 67% during 1933–34, the number who needed relief work increased by 121%.<sup>21</sup>

By this time, skilled tradesmen in the Federal Capital Territory could find work on the construction sites of the Australian War Memorial and the National Library of Australia, but generally the number of people registered as unemployed was still growing. As a result the Commonwealth funds to provide relief work for 1934–35 increased by 5% over the previous year. According to a report in the *Canberra Times* of 2 August 1934, this caused a ‘heated debate’ in Federal Parliament.

A Loan Council meeting held on 29 October 1934 to discuss the financing of the current public works program and future unemployment relief works provoked a series of newspaper articles in the conservative Melbourne Press.

The *Argus* opined that Australia had to a large extent ‘weathered the storm’, but had done so, it complained, by piling up debt without dealing with the fundamental problem of unemployment:

What is wanted is a genuine effort to restore industry to normality, not an orgy of public spending upon relief works, which will add to the already huge debt without making the outlook of surplus workers any the more hopeful.<sup>22</sup>

Under the headline ‘Watch our Borrowing’, the *Melbourne Herald* of 30 October 1934 joined the chorus of disapproval with:

The new plan consists thus far of borrowing for relief works. Although works programmes are fully justifiable for the time being, their accumulating cost will not permit of their being authorised on the existing scale from year to year. The Commonwealth Government is pledged to examine means of relieving unemployment in a permanent way, a task that has been attempted and to some extent overcome in most other civilised countries.

Part of that borrowing was to be raised under the *Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934* by which the Commonwealth Government would provide £200 000 to renovate and maintain Federal properties as a way of providing some relief work before Christmas. Accordingly, Commonwealth departments were invited to submit schedules of proposed works as a matter of urgency.

The Commonwealth Government, in contrast to its earlier attitude, was now beginning to accept that since the welfare of the unemployed bore a direct relationship to the future economic progress of the country as a whole, it was of national and not merely State concern. As an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 30 October pointed out:

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<sup>21</sup> A G Colley, ‘Unemployment Relief in New South Wales’, *Australian Quarterly*, vol. xi, no. 2, June 1939, p. 88.

<sup>22</sup> *Argus*, 30 October 1934.

...one of the worst features of the decrease in employment of recent years is its effect on the regular progress of youth from school to productive work.

The article continued:

The dole in England, established for far longer than ours, and apparently, according to competent observers, destined to be a feature of the country's economy, has actually raised a considerable number of hopeless youths who have never worked, and never will work. From that fate all means to save our own young people is amply justified.

Prime Minister Lyons advised State premiers on 2 November 1934 of the Commonwealth Government's intention to formulate a national plan for the amelioration of distress due to unemployment. As part of that plan, the premiers were called on to provide schedules of public works that might provide relief for the unemployed. In addition, a committee comprising Commonwealth and State representatives was to be established to consider both the feasibility of the proposed works and the appropriate division of financial liability. The premiers were also asked to cooperate in a national survey into unemployment to be undertaken by the Commonwealth Statistician.

The Premier of South Australia, R L Butler, reacted swiftly to the Commonwealth's announcement of its proposed 'national' plan. On 27 November 1934 he announced an ambitious scheme to clear and drain 700 000 acres of swampy land in the south-east of the State. Premier Butler envisioned that over the following five years, 1 500 small farms would be established, providing homes and permanent livelihoods for 6 000 persons who would form a peasant population.

On 18 December 1934 the Commonwealth responded that £125 000 had been allocated to South Australia as part of a national plan, and the Premier, it suggested, should concentrate upon provincial water supply, flood prevention and sewerage installation schemes. Were these undertakings found to be suitably reproductive, they would then be gazetted by the Commonwealth and the money disbursed. South Australia's grandiose development scheme was finally laid to rest in the House of Representatives on 27 March 1935 when Dr Earle Page, the Acting Prime Minister, advised 'there is no probability of this matter being dealt with in the immediate future'.<sup>23</sup>

Other State premiers were far less responsive to the Commonwealth's call for work relief schemes. In fact, on 28 November 1934 they had to be coaxed to submit one or two of their more urgent proposals for examination so that some relief work could be provided for the unemployed before Christmas. On 6 December the Commonwealth Government officially announced that to fulfil its election pledges, it was strenuously attempting to provide work for the thousands of unemployed and was examining every aspect of the situation. The sum of £176 000 was to be provided out of revenue and would be spent on special relief works for the unemployed prior to Christmas.

Ambitious schemes were evidently in the air. On 1 December the Prime Minister proposed a conference of State premiers to be held in Canberra within the fortnight. The conference agenda was to include a discussion on the practicability of proceeding with the standardisation of the intercontinental rail gauge as a way of providing work for the unemployed. The conference did not eventuate.

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<sup>23</sup> House of Representatives *Hansard*, 27 March 1935, Government Printer, Canberra, FCT, vol. 146, p. 317.

Another grand but ultimately unrealised plan was mooted in Federal Parliament on 12 December 1934 when it was suggested that the Commonwealth Government should consider establishing a hydro-electric scheme on the Snowy River to provide work for the unemployed. The Acting Prime Minister replied that it might be more appropriate for the NSW Government to consider the suggestion.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Employment observed in a memorandum to the Prime Minister on 7 December 1934 that among the lists of proposed works being submitted by State premiers were included projects such as water supply and sewerage schemes which involved substantial expenditure by local and State Governments as well as by the Commonwealth.

It is hardly surprising that when dealing with an ambitious and expensive list of proposals for public works from the Premier of Western Australia, the Commonwealth Government responded on 18 December 1934 that the installation of sewerage works in country towns was the most suitable type of relief scheme. The Premier of Western Australia was asked to expedite proposals of that kind so that relief work could be commenced as a matter of urgency. On the same day, a proposal from New South Wales for a series of water and sewerage works as well as some roadworks met with ready Commonwealth approval.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1871-1962

D596

Recorded by: 1871-1961 Australian Customs Service, State Administration,  
SA (CA 802)

Quantity: 53.37 metres (Adelaide)

This series contains administrative and operational policy files for the Australian Customs Service, South Australia. In addition to covering a diverse range of Customs-related activities, the series also contains records dealing with repairs to and maintenance of the 'old' Customs House.

**Commonwealth unemployment relief scheme, Customs House heating system, 1932-33**

**D596, 1932/3474**

**Loan appropriation - Unemployment Relief Act, 1934-35**

**D596, 1935/2607**

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION - STATISTICAL METHODS AND PRINCIPLES,  
1899-1956

PP95/1

Recorded by: 1899-1956 Colonial Secretary's Office (from 1926, Chief  
Secretary's Office) (CA 1256)

Quantity: 13.14 metres (Perth)

Records in this series show statistical methods and principles used in Western Australia and general administrative procedures associated with statistical activities.

**Industrial disputes - probable cost to the government of the distress occasioned by unemployment, c1929**

**PP95/1, 1929/91**

GENERAL AND CLASSIFIED CORRESPONDENCE, 1902-85

B13

Recorded by: 1902-85 Collector of Customs, Melbourne (CA 789)

Quantity: 136 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains correspondence records for the Collector of Customs, Melbourne. Subjects covered in the records include immigration restrictions, tariff classifications, excise, prohibited literature, administration, smuggling, prosecutions, shipping, and exports and imports. The diversity of subjects dealt with in this series reflects the changing functions of the departments of Trade and Customs and Customs and Excise.

**Re lists of persons born out of Australia applying for relief, c1931**

B13, 1931/17260

**Central Relief Bureau, Sydney - Customs, Victoria - re overseas arrivals applications for relief - confirmation of arrival of Maud Dingley, c1934**

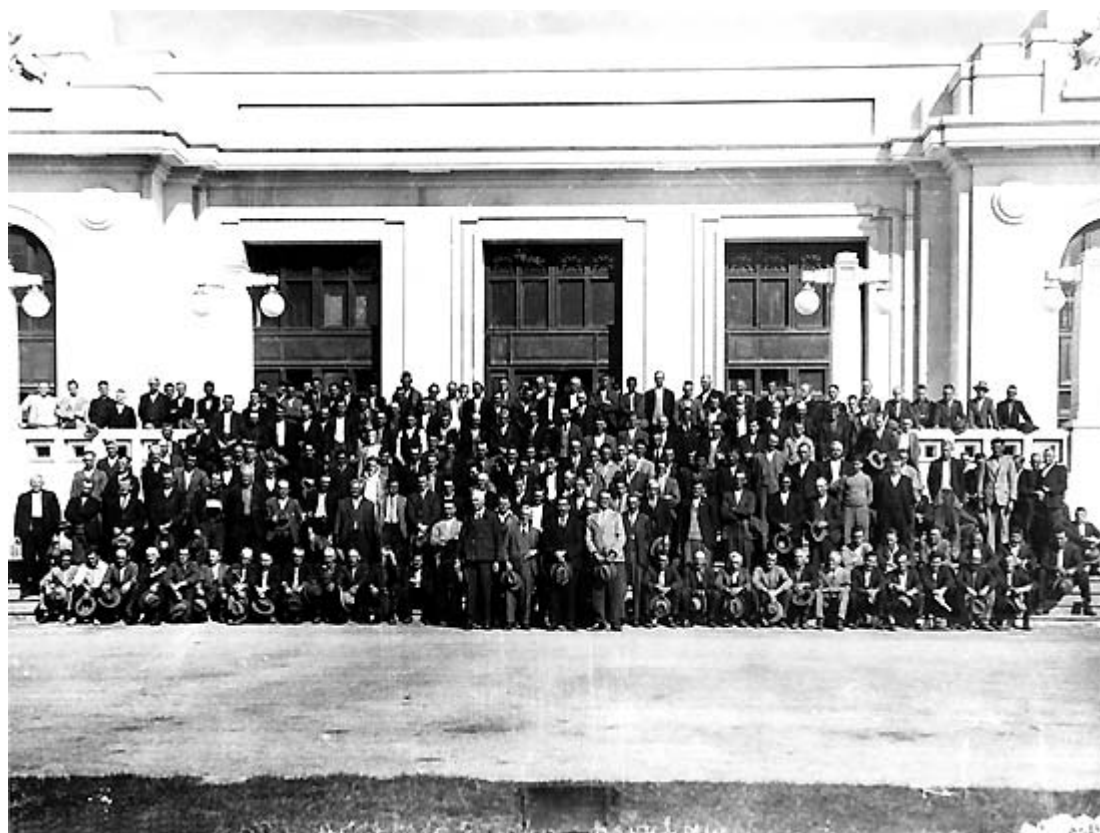
B13, 1934/21228

**Central Relief Bureau, Sydney - re request for verification of arrival of Miss Maud Dingley, c1934**

B13, 1934/21793

**Central Relief Bureau, Sydney - re arrival of Harold Briggs - referred to public library, c1935**

B13, 1935/12511



**A gathering of unemployed men, Parliament House, FCT, 1930.** *National Library of Australia: Collingridge Collection, C1684*

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903-38 A1

Recorded by: 1903-16 Department of External Affairs [I], Melbourne (CA 7)  
 1916-28 Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (CA 15)  
 1928-32 Department of Home Affairs [II], (Central Office) (CA 24)  
 1932-38 Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)  
 Quantity: 454.65 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Unemployment and relief work, Canberra, 1931-35** A1, 1935/2405

This item deals with the lack of opportunity for unskilled unemployed people in Canberra. It includes a Hansard excerpt from 1 August 1934 in which the Minister for the Interior informed the Parliament that unemployment in Canberra had assumed more serious proportions, with 716 men registered as unemployed. For these unskilled men, there was no work to be had outside the Federal Capital Territory and little within it.

The item includes an article from the *Canberra Times* of 2 August 1934 headed 'Unemployment in the Territory. Heated Debate in House'.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, CLASS 1 (GENERAL, PASSPORTS), 1892-1970 A659

Recorded by: 1939 Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)  
 1939-45 Department of the Interior [II], Central Office (CA 31)  
 1945-50 Department of Immigration, Central Office (CA 51)  
 Quantity: 101.255 metres (Canberra)

This series contains the general correspondence files of the Department of the Interior [II] until late 1945, and, from mid-1945, the miscellaneous and passport files of the newly-created Department of Immigration.

**Unemployment relief statistics for Labour Report, 1934-42** A659, 1942/1/5389

This item contains two reports supplied to the Commonwealth Statistician by the Department of the Interior, which provide statistics for the Northern Territory indicating that at 30 June 1934, 16 single men were in receipt of relief work, while six women, 15 children and 52 aged Chinese were receiving sustenance. This represented an increase of four single men, two women, three children and one aged Chinese over the 12-month period.

- CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, ALPHABETICAL PREFIX, 1899-1983 A518
- Recorded by: 1928-41 Territories Branch, Prime Minister's Department (CA 822)  
 1941-51 Department of External Territories [I], Central Office (CA 42)  
 1951-56 Department of Territories [I], Central Office (CA 60)
- Quantity: 241.57 metres (Canberra)
- This series was described in Chapter 2.
- Territories - information re numbers of unemployed in Territories, 1932-33** A518, CB112/1
- GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1901-39 MP341/1
- Recorded by: 1901-39 Postmaster-General's Department, Central Administration (CA 9)
- Quantity: 109 metres (Melbourne)
- This series contains general correspondence files for the Central Administration of the Postmaster-General's Department. It records matters relevant to the entire department rather than individual State branches. It includes material from State postal departments which came under the control of the Commonwealth after Federation.
- Unemployment - relief works Act - repairs, etc, at Commonwealth buildings, 1931-32** MP341/1, 1932/5748
- Installation of electric light in post offices under the Unemployment Relief Scheme, 1931** MP341/1, 1932/6165
- Commonwealth Unemployment Relief Scheme, 1932** MP341/1, 1932/8738
- Appropriation (Unemployment Relief Works) Act, 1931, 1931-32** MP341/1, 1932/9534
- Complaint from the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union re employment of relief workers - Hamilton, NSW, 1930-35** MP341/1, 1935/7780
- Slogan 'Give Employment Assist National Recovery', 1931** MP341/1, 1935/10858
- CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES (THIRD SYSTEM), 1901-50 A461
- Recorded by: 1934-50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
- Quantity: 143.82 metres (Canberra)
- This series was described in Chapter 1.
- Schemes for the relief of unemployment - South Australia, 1925-39** A461, D351/1/9
- This item contains a proposal made by the Premier of South Australia, R L Butler, in response to the Commonwealth Government's request that the States should present schemes to help provide work for the unemployed. Premier Butler proposed that some 700 000 acres of 'swampy and sour' land in his State's

south-east be drained and used to settle 6 000 people as peasant farmers.

The Commonwealth Government advised the Premier that £125 000 had been allocated to South Australia under the *Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934*, as a preliminary step towards providing relief work. The Commonwealth Treasurer would approve programs such as those suggested by NSW – eg provincial water supply and sewerage schemes – where the cost would be apportioned between local authorities, the State Government and the Commonwealth.

**Unemployment relief – Federal Capital Territory, 1930–34**

**A461, F351/1/7**

This item includes a complaint made by the Graziers' Association of NSW, alleging that the disparity between award wages paid to station hands and relief workers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) – eg 36/- per week with keep, or 54/- without compared to 85/- to 92/- per week – would lead to an influx of dissatisfied farm workers to Canberra.

A memorandum from the Department of the Interior to the Prime Minister's Department observed that station hands were paid low wages but had more constant employment, and that many workers in Canberra would forego the higher wages for the greater security enjoyed by the station hands. It also noted:

...eligibility for participation on unemployment relief works at Canberra is confined to applicants with three years continuous residence prior to date of application and thus offers no encouragement for any influx from outside the FCT.

**Unemployment – Christmas relief, 1932–38**

**A461, G351/1/7 part 1**

This item contains a report dated 22 January 1934 from the Unemployment Relief Council of Adelaide indicating renewed optimism in South Australia. The report refers to an 'employment drive' launched in South Australia three weeks prior to Christmas 1933 in an endeavour to stimulate job creation. Other initiatives of this type included a community scheme involving the Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturies, the Local Industries Promotion Council, builders' and contractors' associations and religious groups, and the establishment of 'odd jobs' centres by municipal councils.

The report stated that the Unemployment Relief Council hoped South Australia could take advantage of the tendency towards increased employment as a result of the perceptible return of confidence and that:

...the additional work provided had its reflex in the turnover of many business houses and emporiums and from this point of view the Christmas period was generally considered to be the best during the past few years.

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 2, 1931–34**

**A461, D321/1/1 part 2**

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 3, 1934–39**

**A461, D321/1/1 part 3**



**Schemes for the relief of unemployment - gold mining - State Government assistance to prospectors, 1933-34**

A461, I373/1/5

This item contains a letter requesting information from various State authorities on the provision of unemployment relief to men capable of prospecting for gold. The replies from each State are also located in this item. The Victorian response of 10 December 1934 is particularly detailed.

**Unemployment Relief Act - application to unemployment for members of military units attending camps, 1933-34**

A461, L351/1/7

This item deals with the differing arrangements that existed between the States for the payment of sustenance to unemployed men undergoing military training. The situation arose when a Victorian man who was undergoing annual training in camp as a member of the Citizens' Military Force was struck off the sustenance list because his 'permissible income' was exceeded by his military pay.

**Commonwealth works for the relief of unemployment, 1934-35**

A461, F351/1/10 part 1

This item deals with the renovation and maintenance of Commonwealth property to provide relief work. It contains a submission from the Minister of Defence to the Prime Minister that refers to the neglect of departmental buildings and works because of lack of funding.

The improving economic situation prompted the Minister to offer a £50 000 maintenance works program to provide work for both skilled and unskilled labour throughout the Commonwealth.

The item also contains a memorandum from the Minister for Commerce, F H Stewart, to the Prime Minister's Department, referring to a discussion between the Minister and the Prime Minister in which the Prime Minister agreed that Commonwealth departments should establish work relief programs prior to Christmas 1934 for the renovation and maintenance of Commonwealth property.

The item includes schedules of relief works proposed by Commonwealth departments along with details of the disbursement of £200 000 allocated under the *Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934*.

**Schemes for the relief of unemployment - gold mining, 1934-35**

A461, D373/1/5 part 1

This item contains reports and submissions presented to a conference held on 5 December 1934 on the possibility of assisting the unemployed to engage in goldmining activities.

**Uniform gauge - relief of unemployment - standardisation of broad gauge and provision of standard trunk line to Fremantle - conference, 13 December 1934, 1934-35**

A461, D418/3/3

This item contains correspondence from Prime Minister Lyons to State premiers about a proposed conference which was to include on its agenda an examination of the practicality of standardising the nation's rail gauges as a way of relieving unemployment.

**National plan for the relief of unemployment, 1934-36****A461, C351/1/10 part 1**

On 2 November 1934 Prime Minister Lyons sent a letter to all State premiers in which he referred to the Commonwealth Government's intention to invite the cooperation of the States in formulating a national plan for the amelioration of distress due to unemployment.

In his letter, the Prime Minister stressed that any measures adopted by the Commonwealth would be supplementary to, and not a substitute for, State activities. Each State was asked to provide a list of public relief works, which would in turn be considered by joint Commonwealth and State committees to determine the appropriate division of financial liability between the different authorities.

The response of the States to these requests was less than enthusiastic but by 4 December 1934 the Commonwealth had received brief outlines of the States' proposals.

Among these proposals were the provision of water supplies to 13 country centres in New South Wales, with an estimated cost of £1 250 000 being contributed by local authorities, the State Government and the Commonwealth; post-flood reconstruction in Victoria at a cost of £200 000; and the construction of a bridge over the Brisbane River, flood prevention work and the extension of the metropolitan water supply in Queensland.

A suggestion made by the Premier of South Australia, R L Butler, advocating a large drainage scheme for the south-east of his State involved the proposed expenditure of more than £1 000 000. When asked to provide an alternative and more immediate scheme, the Premier responded with a flood prevention scheme for Adelaide and water supply works for several country centres. The Tasmanian Premier suggested a bridge over the Derwent at Risdon, water supply schemes, and flood prevention works for Launceston.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - Western Australia, 1934-36****A461, G351/1/9 part 2**

This item deals with various schemes for the relief of unemployment in Western Australia. It includes the outline of a relief work program prepared by the Conservator of Forests of Western Australia, in which he proposed that £300 000 be made available annually for the next three years, after which the failing timber supply would be regenerated and employment provided for 1 800 men. The Conservator admitted that it would be difficult to estimate when the first direct returns from the proposed expenditure would be received.

The Acting Premier of Western Australia provided a schedule of proposed works for selection by the Commonwealth. Among other things, it included the provision of water supplies for farming districts; replacement of the Perth causeway; replacement of Fremantle bridges; a dry dock for Fremantle; replacement of the collapsed Port Samson jetty; extension of sewerage in the Perth metropolitan area; and the coordination of a drainage scheme in the south-west of the State.

On 18 December 1934 Prime Minister Lyons advised the Premier that Federal Parliament had authorised the appropriation of £125 000 for Western Australia. Sewerage works in country towns were considered to be the most suitable undertaking, and it was stressed again that the Commonwealth's object was to expedite smaller proposals with a view to getting at least some of the unemployed back to work.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - New South Wales, 1934-41**

**A461, B351/1/9 part 2**

This item contains a schedule of relief works proposed by the Premier of New South Wales. Information in the schedule includes the cost of each work program, the percentage distribution between wages and material, the maximum number of relief workers to be employed and the maximum period for which they were to be employed.

Prime Minister Lyons advised the Premier of NSW on 18 December 1934 that the Federal Parliament had allocated £336 091 to NSW. Of that amount, £63 000 represented the Commonwealth's share of the cost of the Yass-Canberra Highway reconstruction. The balance of the funding went towards water and sewerage works proposed by the New South Wales Government.

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1911-

A431

Recorded by: 1946-72 Department of the Interior [II], Central Office (CA 31)  
1951-54 Department of Territories [I], Central Office (Northern Territory Administration) (CA 60)

Quantity: 321.196 metres (Canberra)

Records in this series deal with projects, legislation, finances, staffing, and departmental organisation and function. The series contains some records created by the Commonwealth Motor Vehicle Registry. It also contains records about Indigenous matters, the Australian War Memorial, the National Botanic Gardens, and the administration of the Northern Territory between 1941 and 1951.

**Moratorium for unemployed in the ACT, 1930-60**

**A431, 1961/1906**

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 'N' PREFIX, 1916-37

A6321

Recorded by: 1933-37 Newnes Investigation Committee (CA 4150)

Quantity: 1.62 metres (Canberra)

Records in this series reflect the purpose of the Newnes Investigation Committee which was established to determine the viability of a commercially sound shale oil industry in the Newnes-Capertee area in New South Wales.

**Labor Daily report, 1933**

**A6321, N191**

- GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES SERIES, 1921-32 CP103/11
- Recorded by: 1921-32 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)  
Quantity: 14.7 metres (Canberra)
- This series was created and classified by the National Archives of Australia from a wide range of material from the 1920s.
- Works - public - benefits and disadvantages as relief to unemployment, 1934-35** CP103/11, 758
- This item contains correspondence and newspaper cuttings, with many of the latter advocating the application of a conservative financial policy.
- CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ALPHABETICAL SERIES, 1921-70 A981
- Recorded by: 1927-42 Department of External Affairs [II], Central Office (CA 18)  
Quantity: 147 metres (Canberra)
- This series was described in Chapter 4.
- ILO unemployment insurance and relief for unemployed, 1933-37** A981, INT 277
- This item contains responses from State premiers to the International Labour Organization's draft convention on unemployment insurance and relief, which was to be held in 1934.
- CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1922-97 K279
- Recorded by: 1922-32 Public Works Branch, Western Australia (CA 760)  
1932-46 Works and Services Branch, Western Australia (CA 971)  
Quantity: 175 metres (Perth)
- Records in this series deal with a diverse range of activities undertaken by the Public Works Branch and its successors in Western Australia. The records contain correspondence, design drawings, contracts, minutes and press releases.
- Matters dealt with include administrative, finance and tender and quotation procedures; contract conditions; material specifications; instructions on the engagement of consultants; fire protection policy and standards; standard specifications and requirements of State and Commonwealth instrumentalities; and project files on various construction projects (including War Service Homes).
- Financial Relief Act, 1934** K279, 1934/119

## CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1923-

F1

Recorded by: 1915-27 Office of Administrator, Northern Territory [I]  
(CA 1072)  
1927-31 Office of Government Resident, North Australia  
(CA 1071)  
1931-73 Administrator, Northern Territory [II], Central  
Registry (CA 1070)

Quantity: 941 metres (Darwin)

This was the Northern Territory Administration's main policy and general correspondence series.

**Assistance to prospectors, 1935-36****F1, 1936/602**

## CORRESPONDENCE FILE, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'C' (COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS) PREFIX, 1929-50

A292

Recorded by: 1930-32 Department of Works and Railways, Central  
Office (CA 14)  
1932-38 Works and Services Branch [I], Canberra (CA 740)

Quantity: 25.02 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Industrial - unemployment relief workers - allocation for work for end financial year, 1934****A292, C6118**

This item deals with the allocation of relief work in the Federal Capital Territory in anticipation of winter. It contains a memorandum from the Works and Services Branch to the Property and Survey Branch, Department of the Interior, Canberra, which reads:

In recent years it has been the practice to provide married unemployment relief workers with from half time to full time employment during the months of May and June - mainly with a view to enabling them to provide their families and themselves with winter clothing. It is therefore recommended that during the last six weeks of the present financial year married men be given whatever employment is possible from funds available...

**Unemployment relief works, 1934****A292, C6055**

This item deals with the funding of relief works carried out in Canberra prior to winter 1934. It includes details of the expenditure of £1 000 between May and June of that year on stormwater drainage works employing relief workers.

**Industrial - unemployment relief workers - allocation for work for the financial year, 1934****A292, C6118**

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, 1930-65		SP1063/1
Recorded by:	1930-65 School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine (CA 633)	
Quantity:	19.8 metres (Sydney)	
Records in this series contain correspondence about the administration of, and the research carried out by, the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.		
<b>Act - unemployment relief, NSW, 1930-39</b>		<b>SP1063/1, 52</b>
FOLDERS OF CABINET PAPERS, 1901-41		A6006
Recorded by:	1976-81 Australian Archives, Central Office (CA 1720)	
	1981-94 Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office (CA 3196)	
	1994 National Archives of Australia, National Office (CA 7970)	
Quantity:	9.18 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in each State office; microfilm (all offices of the Archives)	
This series is more fully described in Chapter 1. It was created by the National Archives of Australia to make (formerly the Australian Archives) documents easier. It contains Cabinet papers, submissions and other material originally copied from departmental files.		
Details of parent files are provided at the foot of the entries for each paper.		
<b>Canberra unemployed, 1930</b>		<b>A6006, 1930/12/16</b>
<b>Parent item</b>		<b>A1, 1930/5912</b>
<b>Travelling unemployed in Canberra, 1931</b>		<b>A6006, 1931/01/31</b>
<b>Parent item</b>		<b>A1, 1930/5912</b>
<b>Yass-Canberra road, 1934</b>		<b>A6006, 1934/11/28</b>
This item deals with a proposal to employ relief workers on roadworks between Yass and Canberra in the Federal Capital Territory. Unemployed men were available locally in both New South Wales and the Federal Capital Territory, and the work was to be shared between the two groups.		
<b>Parent item</b>		<b>A292, C22849</b>



## 6. THE KEY TO RECOVERY

In a statement published in the *Melbourne Herald* of 16 January 1935 Prime Minister Lyons stressed his Government's commitment to private enterprise as the 'chief agency' for ending unemployment.

The Prime Minister disdained unorthodox methods of 'credit expansion', considering that any such experimentation could have only a detrimental effect on the national economy. Sound methods of finance, he said, engendered the confidence that made it possible to borrow large sums of money at low rates of interest. Therefore, any program of public works would be funded by orthodox means. As far as possible, those works would be selected for their reproductivity.

It is significant that the Prime Minister qualified his statement about reproductivity. Previous experience had shown that few relief works were fully reproductive under the definition the Commonwealth Bank Board had tried to enforce. The approved schemes – for water supply and sewerage installation, along with some road and rural development projects – were labour intensive and, it could be argued, provided immediate financial returns on the sums invested.

Although capable of providing work for a large unskilled labour force, afforestation schemes had not previously been considered as properly reproductive because their financial returns could be delayed for decades. However, a national afforestation plan was discussed at a conference of State and Commonwealth forestry officials held in Melbourne in December 1934. Early in 1935 the Commonwealth Government sought and received submissions from the States on forestry projects to provide relief work for the unemployed. A national three-year afforestation plan was subsequently established, with the Commonwealth subsidising the contributions made by the States (with the exception of South Australia and Tasmania) on a pound-for-pound basis.

The plan met with the wholehearted approval of State premiers, but as a condition of subsidising the States in this way, the Commonwealth Government stipulated that 20% of those selected for work in the forestry camps should be between the ages of 17 and 21 years. The reasons for this were twofold: to provide young unemployed men with material benefits, but also to remove them from depressed industrial environments where they could be susceptible to radical influences and to place them in work camps in remote rural areas where they were closely supervised.

If domestic politics is apparent in the establishment of afforestation camps, political developments overseas are reflected in legislation passed by the Commonwealth Parliament early in 1935 allocating funds to the long-neglected Department of Defence. For example, the *Appropriations (Works and Services) Act 1934* provided £102 956 to Defence while the *Loan Appropriations (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934* provided £41 235.

In his opening statement to a conference of selected employers and employee organisations on 22 January 1935, the Prime Minister emphasised his Government's view that while a supportive public works program was needed, it should at no time compete with private enterprise. He continued by saying that the only permanent solution to unemployment lay in the stimulation of primary and secondary industries, with the practical pursuit of that outcome being the stated object of the conference. In reality, as Schedvin has pointed out,



market forces rather than any deliberate policy on the part of the Lyons Government would largely determine the scale and rate of Australia's economic recovery.<sup>24</sup>

As a result, some 300 000 Australians remained unemployed in 1935 (compared to a peak of 500 000 in 1932-33), of whom only about 55 000 were in receipt of relief work.<sup>25</sup>

A contemporary observer of the Great Depression found that in New South Wales as the numbers of those out of work decreased in 1935, the average period of unemployment experienced by individuals increased considerably. And, while the number of those engaged in relief work declined by 23% during the financial year 1935-36, the number of those receiving relief in the form of food rations rose by 7%. This led him to conclude:

It is an unwritten law that the effects of economic maladjustment shall be borne in the first place by those unfortunate individuals for whom no place can be found in the productive process...It is now a commonplace that, even in the most prosperous times, there are not enough jobs to employ all the working population.

But A G Colley was writing in 1939. Total war would soon alter that situation.<sup>26</sup>

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903-38

A1

Recorded by:	1903-16	Department of External Affairs [I] Melbourne (CA 7)
	1916-28	Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (CA 15)
	1928-32	Department of Home Affairs [II], (Central Office) (CA 24)
	1932-38	Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)
Quantity:	454.65 metres (Canberra)	

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**No. 4 Camp - now known as Parkes Barracks - unemployed camp, 1934**

A1, 1934/4662

**Unemployment and relief work - Canberra, 1931-35**

A1, 1935/2405

This item deals with the alleviation of distress in Canberra and contains information about a deputation from the local branch of the Australian Workers' Union to the Minister of the Interior.

The item also contains a report from September 1935 in which relief work rates and conditions in Canberra are compared with those in the States.

**Unemployment relief loan , 1932-35**

A1, 1935/3349

This item contains information about proposals for public works to alleviate unemployment in the States.

It includes, for example, information on the expenditure of Commonwealth funds for public works in Tasmania, including

<sup>24</sup> Schedvin, *op cit*, p. 372.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 340.

<sup>26</sup> Colley, *op cit*, p. 92.

roads, water supplies, flood protection, railway deviations and an aerodrome, and the development of tourist roads and resorts.

It also contains extensive correspondence from State premiers proposing public works schemes to relieve unemployment and requesting the allocation of funds by the Commonwealth.

**Unemployment relief - British scheme - State subsidies of interest and 'improved unemployment grants' to local authorities, 1935**

**A1, 1935/10055**

This item contains part of the Commonwealth Treasurer's 1935-36 Budget speech in which he announced a grant of £100 000 to local authorities for use in public works programs.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, CLASS 1 (GENERAL, PASSPORTS), 1892-1970

A659

Recorded by: 1939 Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)  
1939-45 Department of the Interior [II], Central Office (CA 31)  
1945-50 Department of Immigration, Central Office (CA 51)

Quantity: 101.255 metres (Canberra)

This series contains the general correspondence files of the Department of the Interior [II] until late 1945, and, from mid-1945, the miscellaneous and passport files of the newly-created Department of Immigration.

**Unemployment relief statistics for Labour Report, 1934-42**

**A659, 1942/1/5389**

This item deals with the situation in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and the Northern Territory where the Commonwealth Government was directly responsible for the funding and provision of unemployment relief.

The item illustrates the change in the way relief was distributed to the unemployed. For example, in the FCT the practice of granting food rations as sustenance for the unemployed was altered to supplying cash payments of equivalent value to the rations.

It also contains statistical information about spending on unemployment relief and the population of the FCT dependent on it. The item also deals with the provision of food rations in special cases, the funding of work in lieu of rations for itinerants, the subsidising of the Canberra Relief Society for the supply of firewood to unemployed camps, and the provision of railway fares to destitute persons.

This item also contains a report from the Northern Territory Administration which provided details of expenditure on unemployment relief. For the financial year ending 1934-35, approximately £3 678 was spent on unemployment relief; 13 relief workers were registered; and 69 people were being issued with rations. By October 1935, the number of registered relief workers had increased to 15 while sustenance rations were being issued to 64 men and their 14 dependants.

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES, ALPHABETICAL PREFIX, 1899-1983

A518

Recorded by: 1928-41 Territories Branch, Prime Minister's  
Department (CA 822)  
1941-51 Department of External Territories [I],  
Central Office (CA 42)  
1951-56 Department of Territories [I], Central Office  
(CA 60)

Quantity: 241.57 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 2.

**Territories - information re numbers of unemployed in  
Territories, 1932-33**

A518, CB112/1

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES (THIRD SYSTEM),  
1901-50

A461

Recorded by: 1934-50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 143.82 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - South Australia,  
1925-39**

A461, D351/1/9

This item contains information about the alleviation of unemployment in South Australia. It includes a letter from Prime Minister Lyons in January 1935 to the Premier of South Australia, notifying him that the Commonwealth would supply £125 000 to his State under the *Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934*. Of that amount, £98 550 pounds was to be spent on flood prevention works on the Torrens and Sturt rivers with the balance going towards water supply works at Tweedvale, Streaky Bay and the Tod River.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - Victoria, 1932-38**

A461, F351/1/9

This item contains a submission from the Premier of Victoria to the Under-Secretary for Employment which includes a complete schedule for a three-year continuous program of public works costing an estimated £5 502 000. The submission also includes an amended schedule for a 12-month program proposing that £2 000 000 be spent on various relief work programs.

**Commonwealth works for the relief of unemployment,  
1934-35**

A461, F351/1/10 part 1

This item deals with a situation which arose in NSW, where men who had been given Commonwealth-funded relief work - of whatever duration - were then deprived of State benefits for a time afterwards. In addition, the men lost their places on the employment register by which they were allocated work under the 'Work for the Dole' system that operated in New South Wales. The end result was that for several months afterwards the financial situation of former relief workers was worsened because they had accepted Commonwealth-funded employment. The item includes the responses of the Premier of New South Wales:

...where any men are employed on relief works of short duration (10 days or less), they are entitled to be re-employed immediately in their previous relief employment without any further loss of time. Where, however, the duration of the employment is more than 10 working days, they are required to comply with the regulations governing the emergency relief work scheme, which state that applicants must be unemployed for at least two weeks before becoming eligible for employment under the Scheme.

**Schemes for the relief of unemployment - afforestation, 1934-35**

**A461, C346/1/2 part 1**

This item deals with a national plan of afforestation to provide work relief.

The Commonwealth offered to fund the plan on a pound-for-pound basis with the States, but stipulated that 20% of the money had to be used to employ men under 21 years of age. This presented a problem to the Premier of Western Australia who informed the Prime Minister that his State, due to the efforts of the Boys Employment League of Perth (a Government-subsidised employment agency) had a limited number of men between 17 and 21 available for part-time employment in the forestry industry.

This assertion led to some conflict between the WA Government and the Boys Employment League, because, as the secretary of the league pointed out to the Commonwealth Government, the reason the league could not get enough boys to go to the country was that it had been:

... so extremely parsimoniously treated that it could not afford to give boys fares nor could it provide for meals in trains, no clothing for indigents nor other ameliorations; consequently it is estimated that between 1500 and 1750 unemployed boys exist in the metropolitan area who would be placed were these ameliorations available.

The item also indicates that the afforestation program was reduced from three years to one year. The Commonwealth was to contribute £50 000 to New South Wales, £100 000 to Western Australia, £25 000 to Tasmania, £100 000 to Victoria, £30 000 to Queensland, £17 000 to South Australia, and £9 000 to the Federal Capital Territory. The States were to meet the Commonwealth contribution pound-for-pound, except for Tasmania which would contribute £5 000 and South Australia which was unable to contribute.

The item also provides an insight into the living and working conditions experienced by the young men sent to the forestry camps. Reports received from the States indicated that more than 5 000 men were employed on forestry projects, which would create an asset of vital importance to the nation.

**National plan for the relief of unemployment, 1934-36**

**A461, C351/1/10 part 1**

This file deals with the reality of policies to promote public works for the relief of unemployment in various European countries and in the United States of America.

It contains a study published by the International Labour Organization in January 1935 which reveals that generally the results hoped for from public works projects had not been achieved. The study identified a lack of coordination between the plethora of 'responsible' authorities as the principal reason for this failure.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - Western Australia, 1934-36**

**A461, G351/1/9 part 2**

This item contains correspondence between the Premier of Western Australia and Prime Minister Lyons which culminated in an allocation of £68 500 under the *Loan Appropriation (Relief Works) Act 1934* to assist the WA Government to provide employment relief. The schedule of proposed works, which had a total estimated cost of £137 000, included the provision of water supplies to 18 rural areas; sewerage works at Northam; work on the approaches to the Point Samson jetty; and construction of a bridge near Carnarvon.

**Schemes for relief of unemployment - New South Wales, 1934-41**

**A461, B351/1/9 part 2**

This item contains a letter of 10 January 1935 from the Premier of New South Wales to Prime Minister Lyons which states in part:

I desire to inform you that this Government continues to receive representations from local residents and bodies that the Hydro-Electric development of the Snowy River should be proceeded with.

The item also contains numerous letters from progress associations and town councils in New South Wales to their Federal members of Parliament and passed to the Prime Minister's Department. These letters all ask for expenditure of Commonwealth funds on local facilities, under the *Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1935*. The Prime Minister's Department invariably responded that such requests should be directed to the NSW Government.

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 2, 1931-34**

**A461, D321/1/1 part 2**

**Federal coal for relief of unemployed, part 3, 1934-39**

**A461, D321/1/1 part 3**

BILL FILES, 1901-97

A2863

Recorded by: 1901-70 Attorney-General's Department Central Office (CA 5)

Quantity: 330.84 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of files containing manuscript drafts and proof and final copies (with manuscript amendments) of Bills at their first, second and third readings. It also contains correspondence about the preparation of Bills.

**Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Bill 1935, 1935**

**A2863, 1935/2**

This item contains printed copies of the above Bill, which was passed by Federal Parliament in 1935.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES (CLASS 401), 1912-42 A664

Recorded by: 1924-39 Department of Defence [II], Central Administration (CA 19)  
1939-40 Department of Defence Coordination, Central Office (CA 37)

Quantity: 10.08 metres (Canberra)

This series records general administrative activities of the Department of Defence. It is concerned with the coordinating and policy-making functions of Defence rather than with the Defence Forces.

**Unemployment relief works, 1934-35**

A664, 474/401/593

This item contains a Treasury Department communication to the Department of Defence advising that it had been allocated £102 956 from the *Appropriations (Works and Services) Act 1934* and £41 235 from the *Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934*, as part of the Commonwealth's attempt to provide unemployment relief.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES SERIES, 1921-32

CP103/11

Recorded by: 1921-32 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 14.7 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 1.

**Public Works -Appropriation (Works and Services) Act 1934 (Christmas relief) - Loan Appropriation (Unemployment Relief) Act 1934 - unemployment relief activities (foreign) (2 files), 1934-35**

CP103/11, 773

This double item contains information from the 1934-35 Estimates, specifically Commonwealth Government appropriations for work relief projects.

The item also holds a letter from Major Longfield Lloyd of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch addressed to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Employment, which was written in response to a request for information about the apparently successful adoption in Italy of a shorter working week to alleviate unemployment. Longfield Lloyd referred to an October 1934 speech by Mussolini, and placed a copy of 'News Notes on Fascist Corporations' (Rome, August-September 1934) on the file.

**Works - public - benefits and disadvantages as relief to unemployment, 1934-35**

CP103/11, 758

This item contains newspaper cuttings and correspondence on public works as an economically viable way to alleviate unemployment.

It contains, for example, an article from the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 4 February 1935 entitled 'Public Works and Recovery', in which Dr E Ronald Walker is quoted as advocating public works in times of economic depression. In the article Dr Walker stressed the need to be selective about the type of public works undertaken to avoid competition with private enterprise.

## CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1922-97

K279

Recorded by: 1922-32 Public Works Branch, Western Australia (CA 760)  
 1932-46 Works and Services Branch, Western Australia  
 (CA 971)

Quantity: 175 metres (Perth)

Records in this series deal with a diverse range of activities undertaken by the Public Works Branch and its successors in Western Australia. The records contain correspondence, designs drawings, contracts, minutes and press releases.

Matters dealt with include administrative, finance and tender and quotation procedures; contract conditions; material specifications; instructions on the engagement of consultants; fire protection policy and standards; standard specifications and requirements of State and Commonwealth instrumentalities; and project files on various construction projects (including War Service Homes).

**Financial Relief Act, 1934****K279, 1934/119**

## FOLDERS OF CABINET PAPERS, 1901-41

A6006

Recorded by: 1976-81 Australian Archives, Central Office (CA 1720)  
 1981-94 Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office  
 (CA 3196)  
 1994 National Archives of Australia, National Office  
 (CA 7970)

Quantity: 9.18 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in each State office; microfilm (all offices of the Archives)

This series is more fully described in Chapter 1. It was created by the National Archives of Australia (formerly the Australian Archives) to make access to Cabinet documents easier. It contains Cabinet papers, submissions and other material originally copied from departmental files.

Details of parent files are provided at the foot of the entries for each paper.

**Date of unemployment conference, 1935****A6006, 1935/01/04**

This item provides some insight into the Lyons Cabinet's priorities for solving the unemployment problem.

**Parent item****A461, D351/1/10****Unemployment proposals - afforestation, 1935****A6006, 1935/01/04**

This item deals with a national afforestation plan to relieve unemployment.

**Parent item****No longer extant****Relief of unemployment - Commonwealth public works, 1935****A6006, 1935/03/07**

This item contains schedules of Commonwealth public works to the value of £250 000 intended to relieve unemployment. The schedules were submitted on request to Cabinet by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Employment, F H Stewart.

**Parent item****No longer extant**

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SERIES (ARMY HEADQUARTERS), 1939-42

MP508/1

Recorded by: 1939 Army Headquarters, Department of Defence [II]  
(CA 2671)

Quantity: 133 metres (Melbourne)

This series was described in Chapter 3.

**Purpose recondition of the Sutherland-Liverpool Road and  
Christmas relief to the unemployed, 1931-41**

**MP508/1, 289/701/300**

RECORDS AND REPORTS, 1941

A11620

Recorded by: 1941 Parliamentary Committee for the Survey of  
Manpower and Resources (CA 719)

Quantity: 2.34 metres (Canberra)

Formerly known as CP3/1, this series consists of correspondence, memoranda, statistical data, minutes of evidence, and reports that were for the most part compiled during 1941 by the Parliamentary Committee for the Survey of Manpower and Resources. After the committee ceased to function the series remained in the custody of Mr G Whiteford who had been the committee secretary. It was eventually transferred to the Archives Division.

**Manpower and Resources Survey Committee - papers re  
unemployment and unemployment relief, 1935-37**

**A11620, 99**

This item contains various Commonwealth and State reports on the unemployment situation, including one focussing on non-government bodies endeavouring to relieve the unemployment situation.

According to Mr Whiteford, who prepared the report, the organisations generally believed that the unemployment situation was improving, although some exceptions to that were noted (specifically the number and training of males over the age of 18 years).





## APPENDIX 1 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

### **January 1929**

Australia is unable to raise further long-term loans while short-term debt on the London money market is at an alarmingly high level and increasing. There is the persistent problem of an adverse balance of trade. The unemployment level is 10% and increasing. Curtailment of public works programs because of lack of finance exacerbates the unemployment situation, while the introduction of new industrial awards results in strikes on the waterfront and among timber industry workers.

### **March 1929**

Lockouts of miners begin on the northern coalfields and will continue until June 1930.

### **May 1929**

At the Premiers' Conference, Prime Minister S M Bruce issues an ultimatum: either industrial powers shall be transferred in full to the Commonwealth Government or the Commonwealth will withdraw from arbitration, retaining responsibility only for the maritime industries.

### **October 1929**

The Bruce-Page Government, having introduced the Maritime Industries Bill, is defeated. The Labor Opposition led by Joseph Scullin wins a landslide election victory on 12 October 1929 and takes office on 22 October.

### **November 1929**

First parliamentary sitting for the new Labor Government starts on 20 November. Australia is facing the prospect of national insolvency.

### **December 1929**

The Scullin Government increases tariff protection to an unprecedented level.

On 10 December the Commonwealth Government announces that £1 000 000 accrued as a result of the Federal Aids Roads Agreement will be provided to the States on a population basis to provide relief work for the unemployed.

### **27 February 1930**

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports serious clashes between police and the workless in Sydney.

### **10 March 1930**

Trading banks announce the devaluation of the Australian pound against the pound sterling.

### **June 1930**

Prime Minister Scullin announces that Sir Otto Niemeyer of the Bank of England will conduct an inquiry into Australia's financial situation.

**12 June 1930**

The Prime Minister announces a grant of £1 000 000 for the relief of unemployment to be distributed amongst the States on a population basis. Welfare of the unemployed is seen to be a State rather than a national responsibility.

**9 July 1930**

The Federal Treasurer, E G Theodore, resigns from Cabinet after the Queensland Government announces an inquiry into the probity of his personal business affairs. The Prime Minister assumes the Treasury portfolio.

**11 August 1930**

The Prime Minister convinces his Cabinet that Sir Robert Gibson should be re-appointed to the Commonwealth Bank Board.

**18 August 1930**

Sir Otto Niemeyer, the Bank of England's emissary to Australia, addresses the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne. He informs the conference that Australian living standards are too high and that it is essential that severe deflationary measures be taken.

Under the Melbourne Agreement, the Premiers agree to work towards balancing their budgets, to refrain from overseas borrowing and to curtail programs of public works.

**25 August 1930**

Prime Minister Scullin leaves Australia to attend an Imperial Conference in London. He is overseas until 6 January 1931 during which time J E Fenton is Acting Prime Minister and J A Lyons is Acting Treasurer.

**25 October 1930**

J T Lang wins the New South Wales State election for the Australian Labor Party, defeating T Bavin.

**17 December 1930**

The Commonwealth Government announces that £500 000 will be distributed among the States to provide relief work for the unemployed prior to Christmas. The States find it difficult, in the short time available, to organise relief work that satisfies the Commonwealth Government's requirements for reproductive public works programs and the maintenance of award rates of pay.

**6 January 1931**

The Prime Minister arrives back in Australia.

**10 January 1931**

During the 'Beef Riot' in Adelaide, a large number of the unemployed, protesting at the content of their sustenance rations, clash with police.

**22 January 1931**

The Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration announces a 10% reduction in the basic wage, in addition to reductions made in accordance with the fall in the cost of living index. The reduction was effective from 1 February 1931.

**29 January 1931**

Prime Minister Scullin reinstates E G Theodore as Federal Treasurer.

Federal Cabinet receives a report of a riot in Darwin in which 50 relief workers demanding more frequent work clashed with police.

**4 February 1931**

J E Fenton and J A Lyons resign their Cabinet positions.

**5 February 1931**

The selection of candidates for a by-election in the safe Labor seat of East Sydney brings political rivals J T Lang and E G Theodore into open conflict. Lang's candidate, E J Ward, wins the seat, but is subsequently refused membership of Federal Caucus by the Prime Minister.

In Canberra a group of Labor men led by J A Beasley and including Ward form a splinter group, 'Lang Labor'.

**6 to 26 February 1931**

At the February Premiers' Conference, E G Theodore proposes a mildly inflationary plan of credit expansion.

The Premier of New South Wales, J T Lang, puts forward a radical plan of default on interest payments to British bond-holders and the drastic reduction of interest on all other Australian borrowings.

**6 March 1931**

A demonstration by the unemployed outside the Treasury Building in Perth, WA escalates into a riot.

**13 March 1931**

During a vote on a no-confidence motion in the House of Representatives, Fenton, Lyons and three other Labor men cross the floor to vote with the Nationalist Opposition. Only the votes of the six members of Lang Labor save Scullin's Ministry. Lang Labor now holds the balance of power in the House of Representatives.

**30 March 1931**

New South Wales Premier Lang defaults on interest payments due on loans raised in London by the State Government. The Commonwealth Government has to pay the due amounts and commences legal proceedings for their recovery from the New South Wales Government.

**2 April 1931**

Sir Robert Gibson, Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank Board, issues an ultimatum: unless Commonwealth and State Governments reduce their deficits, the bank will refuse them further short-term accommodation.

**17 April 1931**

The Senate rejects the Fiduciary Notes Bill, the first in a series of legislative proposals for controlled inflation by which the Government hoped to create credit.

**23 April 1931**

The Government Savings Bank of New South Wales is forced to close its doors after a run on its holdings.

**7 May 1931**

Lyons emerges as Leader of the United Australia Party.

**10 May 1931**

Armed police suppress resistance organised by the Unemployed Workers' Movement outside the sustenance ration depot at Bulli on the New South Wales south coast.

**13 May 1931**

After Sir Robert Gibson is called before the Bar of the House, the Senate defeats the Gold Shipment Bill, by which the Government had hoped to reduce the nation's short-term debt.

**25 May-11 June 1931**

The Premiers' Conference results in the severely deflationary Premiers' Plan.

**8-16 September 1931**

After correspondence between the Prime Minister and Sir Robert Gibson, the Commonwealth Bank agrees to provide the Government with £3 000 000-worth of credit over six months to assist wheat-growers. It refuses, however, to provide £5 000 000 to the Government to fund relief work for the unemployed. As a concession, the bank is prepared to consider applications on their merits when they are delivered to it directly by local authorities.

**8 November 1931**

Prime Minister Scullin endeavours to instil some confidence by heralding signs of economic improvement during a radio broadcast. He announces that the Government has appropriated £250 000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, to be spent on refurbishing Commonwealth property in the various States and provide relief work for the unemployed prior to Christmas. He estimates that 14 000 men will receive temporary employment. The *Appropriation (Unemployment Relief Works) Act 1931* refers to this.

**November 25 1931**

'Stabber Jack' Beasley, leader of Lang Labor in the House of Representatives, accuses the Federal Treasurer, E G Theodore, of political corruption in the allocation of relief work. Scullin accepts this as a no-confidence motion and in the subsequent division Lang Labor crosses the floor to vote with the Opposition and the Scullin Government is defeated. The Twelfth Commonwealth Parliament is dissolved on 27 November 1931.

**19 December 1931**

Both Houses of Parliament go to the polls, and the Labor Government suffers a decisive defeat at the hands of the United Australia Party led by J A Lyons.

**6 January 1932**

The Lyons Ministry takes office.

**29 January 1932**

Lang Government in New South Wales defaults once more on interest payments to British bond-holders.

**3 May 1932**

The *Loan (Unemployment Relief Works) Act 1932* authorises the granting of £1 800 000 by the Commonwealth Government to the States on condition that employment councils be established in each State. Funds are allocated to State Governments, except in New South Wales where the funds are to be provided directly to local government bodies. Works to be undertaken require specific approval of the appropriate employment council.

**13 May 1932**

J T Lang is dismissed from office as Premier by the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Philip Game.

**11 June 1932**

J T Lang is defeated in the State election by the United Australia Party–Country Party coalition led by B S B Stevens. The new Government undertakes to pay New South Wales's interest bills.

**30 June 1932**

Unemployment among trade union members is running at 30% nationally. This is the highest unemployment level reached for unionists during the Great Depression.

**7 September 1932**

A supervisory committee comprising senior Commonwealth public service officials is formed to ensure that relief work for the unemployed funded by the Commonwealth is properly reproductive – ie capable of generating financial returns sufficient to meet interest payments on loan and sinking fund contributions.

**8 April 1933**

A compulsory referendum held in Western Australia supports a proposal to secede from the Federation.

**30 June 1933**

A census reveals that approximately 50% of unemployed males have been without a job for over two years. Approximately one in ten have been unemployed for four or more years.

However, the first indication of an improvement in employment levels since the onset of the Great Depression becomes apparent in 1933, with the number of unemployed unionists falling from 26.5% in the first quarter of the year to 23% in the fourth quarter.

**October 1933**

Lyons and his party are returned to government as a result of a Federal election.

**November 1933**

The Federal Budget is hailed as the 'restoration' Budget.

**December 1933**

The Commonwealth Government places tax on wheat to subsidise wheat-growers.

**2 November 1934**

The Prime Minister indicates that the Commonwealth Government has accepted overall responsibility for the welfare of the unemployed by inviting the cooperation of the States in the formulation of a national plan for the relief of distress as a result of unemployment. State premiers are requested to provide schedules of possible public works together with estimates of costs so that the share of financial liability may be ascertained.

**5 December 1934**

The Under-Secretary for Employment opens a national employment mining conference with the objective of stimulating employment within the mining industry.

**January 1935**

A national conference of forestry officials in December 1934 leads to announcement of a national three-year afforestation scheme. The scheme will employ relief workers and is to be subsidised pound-for-pound by the Commonwealth.

**June 1935 to June 1936**

Commonwealth Government expenditure on relief works for the financial year 1935–36 provides full-time employment for approximately 55 000 from a total of 300 000 jobless. The amount spent on dole payments is now twice that spent on the provision of relief work for the unemployed.

## APPENDIX 2 COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES

The following information about ministries formed during the Scullin and Lyons governments is drawn from the *Commonwealth Parliamentary Handbook*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, 1965. In cases where an individual's name is followed by the acronym 'CP' (Commonwealth Person) and a number, the National Archives of Australia holds personal records of that individual. These records may be accessed through RecordSearch.

### Scullin Ministry – 22 October 1929 to 6 January 1932

James Henry SCULLIN (CP 63)	Prime Minister, Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Industry, 22 October 1929 to 6 January 1932
Edward Granville THEODORE	Treasurer, 22 October 1929 to 9 July 1930
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
James Henry SCULLIN	Treasurer, 9 July 1930 to 29 January 1931
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
Edward Granville THEODORE	Treasurer, 29 January 1931 to 6 January 1932
John Joseph DALY	Vice-President of the Executive Council, 22 October 1929 to 3 March 1931
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
John BARNES	Vice-President of the Executive Council, 3 March 1931 to 6 January 1932
Frank BRENNAN	Attorney-General, 22 October 1929 to 6 January 1932
Joseph Aloysius LYONS (CP 254)	Postmaster-General and Minister for Works and Railways, 22 October 1929 to 4 February 1931
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
Albert Ernest GREEN	Postmaster-General and Minister for Works and Railways, 4 February 1931 to 6 January 1932
James Edward FENTON	Minister for Trade and Customs, 22 October 1929 to 4 February 1931
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
Francis Michael FORDE (CP 81)	Minister for Trade and Customs, 4 February 1931 to 6 January 1932
Arthur BLAKELY	Minister for Home Affairs, 22 October 1929 to 6 January 1932



Frank ANSTEY	Minister for Health and Minister for Repatriation, 22 October 1929 to 3 March 1931
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
John McNEILL	Minister for Health and Minister for Repatriation, 3 March 1931 to 6 January 1932
Albert Ernest GREEN	Minister for Defence, 22 October 1929 to 4 February 1931
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
John Joseph DALY	Minister for Defence, 4 February 1931 to 3 March 1931
<i>Succeeded by:</i>	
Joseph Benedict CHIFLEY (CP 268)	Minister for Defence, 3 March 1931 to 6 January 1932
Parker John MOLONEY	Minister for Markets and Transport, 22 October 1929 to 6 January 1932
John BARNES	Honorary Minister, 22 October 1929 to 4 February 1931
Francis Michael FORDE	Honorary Minister, 22 October 1929 to 4 February 1931
John Albert BEASLEY (CP 84)	Honorary Minister, 22 October 1929 to 3 March 1931
Edward James HOLLOWAY	Honorary Minister, 3 March 1931 to 12 June 1931
Charles Ernest CULLEY	Honorary Minister, 3 March 1931 to 24 June 1931
John Braidwood DOOLEY	Honorary Minister, 3 March 1931 to 6 January 1932
John Joseph DALY	Honorary Minister, 26 June 1931 to 6 January 1932
Lucien Lawrence CUNNINGHAM	Honorary Minister, 26 June 1931 to 6 January 1932

## Lyons Ministry – 6 January 1932 to 7 November 1938

Joseph Aloysius LYONS Prime Minister, 6 January 1932 to 7 November 1938; Treasurer, 6 January 1932 to 3 October 1935

*Succeeded by:*

Richard Gardiner CASEY (CP 24) Treasurer, 3 October 1935 to 7 November 1938

John Greig LATHAM (CP 148) Attorney-General, Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Defence, 6 January 1932 to 12 October 1934

*Succeeded by:*

Robert Gordon MENZIES (CP 54) Attorney-General and Minister for Industry, 12 October 1934 to 7 November 1938

*And*

Sir George Foster PEARCE (CP 151) Minister for External Affairs, 12 October 1934 to 29 November 1937; Minister in Charge of Territories, 12 October 1934 to 29 November 1937

*Succeeded by:*

William Morris HUGHES (CP 290) Minister for External Affairs and Minister in Charge of Territories, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938

Stanley Melbourne BRUCE (CP 23) Assistant Treasurer, 6 January 1932 to 23 June 1932; Minister without portfolio, 23 June 1932 to 6 October 1933

*Succeeded by:*

Sir William MASSEY-GREENE Assistant Treasurer, 23 June 1932 to 11 October 1933

Sir George Foster PEARCE Minister for Defence, January 1932 to 12 October 1934

*Succeeded by:*

Sir Robert Archdale PARKHILL Minister for Defence, 12 October 1934 to 20 November 1937

Joseph Aloysius LYONS Minister for Defence, 20 to 29 November 1937

*Succeeded by:*

Harold Victor Campbell THORBY Minister for Defence, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938

James Edward FENTON Postmaster-General, 6 January 1932 to 13 October 1932

*Succeeded by:*

Sir Robert Archdale PARKHILL Postmaster-General, 13 October 1932 to 12 October 1934

*Succeeded by:*

Alexander John McLACHLAN Postmaster-General, 12 October 1934 to 7 November 1938; Minister in Charge of Development and Scientific and Industrial Research, 6 January 1932 to 29 November 1937

*Succeeded by:*

Richard Gardiner CASEY Minister in Charge of Development and Scientific and Industrial Research, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938

Sir Henry Somer GULLETT Minister for Trade and Customs, 6 January 1932 to 14 January 1933

*Succeeded by:*

Thomas Walter WHITE (CP 145) Minister for Trade and Customs, 14 January 1933 to November 1938

Sir Robert Archdale PARKHILL Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Transport, 6 January 1932 to 12 April 1932

Sir Robert Archdale PARKHILL Minister for the Interior (on 12 April 1932 the departments of Home Affairs, Transport, and Works and Railways were amalgamated into the Department of the Interior), 12 April 1932 to 13 October 1932

*Succeeded by:*

John Arthur PERKINS Minister for the Interior, 13 October 1932 to 12 October 1934

*Succeeded by:*

Eric John HARRISON (CP 648) Minister for the Interior, 12 October 1934 to 9 November 1934

*Succeeded by:*

Thomas PATERSON Minister for the Interior, 9 November 1934 to 9 November 1937

*Succeeded by:*

John McEWEN (CP 47)	Minister for the Interior, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938
Charles Allan Seymour HAWKER	Minister for Markets, 6 January 1932 to 13 April 1932; Minister for Repatriation, 6 January 1932 to 12 April 1932
Charles Allen Seymour HAWKER	Minister for Commerce (until 13 April 1932, the Department of Markets), 13 April 1932 to 23 September 1932

*Succeeded by:*

Joseph Aloysius LYONS	Minister for Commerce, 3 to 13 October 1932
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*Succeeded by:*

Frederick Harold STEWART (CP 228)	Minister for Commerce, 13 October 1932 to 9 November 1934
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*Succeeded by:*

Sir Earle Christmas Grafton PAGE	Minister for Commerce, 9 November 1934 to 7 November 1938
Charles William Clanan MARR	Minister for Health and Minister for Works and Railways, 6 January 1932 to 12 April 1932
Charles William Clanan MARR	Minister for Health and Minister for Repatriation (following the amalgamation of the departments of Home Affairs, Transport, and Works and Railways, Hon C W C Marr was appointed Minister for Repatriation), 12 April 1932 to 12 October 1934; Minister in Charge of Territories, 6 January 1932 to 24 May 1934

*Succeeded by:*

William Morris HUGHES	Minister for Health and Minister for Repatriation, 12 October 1934 to 6 November 1935
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*Succeeded by:*

Joseph Aloysius LYONS	Minister for Health, 8 November 1935 to 26 February 1936; Minister for Repatriation, 8 November 1935 to 26 February 1936
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*Succeeded by:*

William Morris HUGHES	Minister for Health, 26 February 1936 to 29 November 1937; Minister for Repatriation, 6 February 1936 to 29 November 1937
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*Succeeded by:*

Sir Earle Christmas Grafton PAGE Minister for Health, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938

*And*

Hattil Spencer FOLL Minister for Repatriation and Minister in Charge of War Service Homes, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938

Alexander John McLACHLAN Vice President of the Executive Council, 6 January 1932 to 12 October 1934

*Succeeded by:*

William Morris HUGHES Vice President of the Executive Council, 12 October 1934 to 6 November 1935

*Succeeded by:*

Joseph Aloysius LYONS Vice President of the Executive Council, 8 November 1935 to 29 November 1937

William Morris HUGHES Vice President of the Executive Council, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938

*Succeeded by:*

Sir William MASSEY-GREENE Minister assisting the Leader of the Government in the Senate, 6 January 1932 to 23 June 1932; Assistant Treasurer, 23 June 1932 to 11 October 1933

Josiah FRANCIS Assistant Minister for Defence and Minister in Charge of War Service Homes, 6 January 1932 to 12 October 1934; Minister in Charge of War Service Homes and Minister Assisting the Minister for Repatriation, 12 October 1934 to 9 November 1934

John Arthur PERKINS Assistant Minister for Trade and Customs, 6 January 1932 to 13 October 1932

James Allan GUY Assistant Minister for Trade and Customs, 13 October 1932 to 12 October 1934

Richard Gardiner CASEY Assistant Minister (Treasury) – Assistant Treasurer, 25 September 1933 to 3 October 1935

Sir Harry Sutherland Wightman LAWSON Assistant Minister (Treasury), 17 October 1933 to 12 October 1934; Minister in Charge of Territories, 24 May 1934 to 12 October 1934

Sir Henry Somer GULLETT	Minister directing negotiations for trade treaties, 12 October 1934 to 11 March 1937
Charles William Clanan MARR	Minister without portfolio, 12 October 1934 to 9 November 1934; Honorary Minister in Charge of the Royal Visit, 9 November 1934 to 31 December 1934
Thomas Cornelius BRENNAN	Minister Assisting the Minister for Commerce, 12 October 1934 to 9 November 1934; Minister Assisting the Minister for Commerce and the Minister for Industry, 9 November 1934 to 29 November 1937
Harold Victor Campbell THORBY	Minister in Charge of War Service Homes, 9 November 1934 to 1 September 1935; Minister Assisting the Minister for Repatriation, 1934 to 1 September 1935; Minister in Charge of War Service Homes, 1 September 1935 to 11 September 1936; Minister Assisting the Minister for Commerce, 1 September 1935 to 29 November 1937
James Aitchson Johnston HUNTER	Minister representing the Postmaster-General in the House of Representatives, 9 November 1934 to September 1935; Minister Assisting the Minister for Repatriation, 1 September 1935 to 29 November 1937; Minister Assisting the Minister for the Interior, 23 September 1935 to 29 November 1937; Minister in Charge of War Service Homes, 11 September 1936 to 29 November 1937; Minister Assisting the Minister for Commerce, 18 March 1937 to 25 July 1937
John Arthur PERKINS	Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Customs, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938
Allan Nicoll MacDONALD	Minister Assisting the Minister for Commerce, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938
Victor Charles THOMPSON	Minister assisting the Treasurer, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938; Minister Assisting the Minister for the Interior, 1 February 1938 to 7 November 1938
Archie Galbraith CAMERON	Minister Assisting the Minister for Commerce, 29 November 1937 to 7 November 1938

## APPENDIX 3 COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC ADVISERS

This appendix lists some of the Australian economic advisers and senior public servants whose activities immediately before and during the Great Depression are mentioned in records held by the National Archives of Australia. Further information on many of these individuals can be found in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. In cases where an individual's name is followed by the acronym 'CP' (Commonwealth Person) and a number, the National Archives of Australia holds personal records of that individual. These records may be accessed through RecordSearch.

### **BRIGDEN, J B**

Economist to the Overseas Transport Association in 1929. Member of secretariat committee which produced a report of 3 September 1931 for the Premiers' Conference about employment and production. Among his publications are: *The Australian Tariff: An Economic Enquiry* (1929), *Escape to Prosperity* (1930) and *Credit: A description and critical account of what it is, what is proposed, what has been done and what might be done in Australia* (1932).

### **BROWN, H C**

Permanent Head of the Department of the Interior [I] from 12 April 1932 to 22 November 1935.

### **CARRODUS, J A**

Permanent Head of the Department of the Interior [I] from 25 November 1935 to 26 April 1936.

### **CLEMENS, Sir William**

Permanent Head of the Department of Home Affairs [II], 10 to 31 December 1928.

### **COPLAND, D B**

Dean of the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Melbourne. An influential spokesman who represented the views of academic economists on public affairs. His publications include *What Have the Banks Done?* (1931).

### **DALEY, C S (CP 8)**

Secretary of the Federal Capital Commission from 1924 to 1930. Civic Administrator of the Federal Capital Territory Branch, Department of Home Affairs from 1930 to 1932, and Assistant Secretary of Department of the Interior from 1932 to 1952.

### **DEANE, P E (CP 78)**

Secretary and Permanent Head of the Prime Minister's Department from 11 February 1921 to 31 December 1928. Secretary of the Department of External Affairs [II] from 1921 to 1928. Secretary and Permanent Head of the Department of Home Affairs [II] from 1 January 1929 to 12 April 1932.

### **DYASON, E C**

A prominent Melbourne stockbroker and active member of the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand. In 1930 he was an early proponent of an 'inflationary' fiduciary note issue.

**GARRAN, Sir Robert**

Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department from 1 January 1901 to 9 February 1932.

**GEPP, H W**

Retained by the Commonwealth Government as a consultant on development, he was a member of the secretariat committee on employment and production reporting to the Premiers' Conference of September 1931.

**GIBLIN, L F**

Appointed Ritchie Professor of Economics at the University of Melbourne in 1929, he was a long-standing and close friend of Prime Minister Lyons, and an influential adviser to the Lyons Federal Ministry. In 1951 he published *The Growth of a Central Bank*.

**GIBSON, Sir Robert**

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Commonwealth Bank from 1926 until his death in 1934. He was impatient of expert advice and possessed a narrowly orthodox conviction about what constituted 'sound finance', which dominated the Commonwealth Bank Board. At a time when the Federal Treasury was little more than the accounting arm of the Government, he exerted a major influence on the policy decisions of the Commonwealth Government.

**GOURGAND, P A**

Permanent Head of the Department of Public Works and Railways from 11 June 1929 to 12 April 1932.

**GUNN, J**

Former Commissioner of the Development and Migration Commission and Director of the Development Branch of the Prime Minister's Department from August 1931 to August 1935. Chairman of the secretariat committee reporting to the Premiers' Conference in September 1931.

**HYTTEN, T**

Professor of Economics at the University of Tasmania. Member of the secretariat committee on employment and production reporting to the Premiers' Conference in September 1931.

**IRVINE, R F**

Formerly Professor of Economics at Sydney University and a Director of the Primary Producers' Bank. He became an economic adviser to the Commonwealth Treasurer, E G Theodore, in the second half of 1930. During the hearings that led in January 1931 to the Commonwealth Arbitration Court's decision to reduce the basic wage, he proposed that an initial measure to re-absorb the unemployed would be to create credit by means of a carefully controlled expansion of the note issue. He published *The Midas Delusion* in 1933.

**KNOWLES, Sir George**

Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department from 10 February 1932 to 8 May 1946.



**McLAREN, Sir John G (CP 174)**

Secretary of the Department of Home and Territories from 1921 to 1928. Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department and the Department of External Affairs from 1 January 1929 to 2 March 1933. He was Chairman of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Employment in 1932 and Official Secretary in London to the Commonwealth from 1933 to 1936. He represented Australia at the International Labour Conference in Geneva in 1933-34.

**MELVILLE, L G**

Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide, he established the research department at the Commonwealth Bank. His orthodox views on financial policy have been likened to dogmatism. A lecture that he delivered in Adelaide in 1934 was entitled 'Gold Standard or Goods Standard'.

**SHANN, E O G**

Professor of History and Economics at the University of Western Australia who became the first economist at the Bank of New South Wales. The holder of strictly orthodox views about financial policy, he was one of three economists selected in January 1931 to advise the Loan Council on the deflationary measures required to bring stability to the Australian economy. He published a number of works in association with D B Copland, including *The Battle of the Plans* (1931), *The Crisis in Australian Finance, 1929-31* (1931) and *The Australian Price Structure, 1932* (1933).

**SHEPHERD, M L (CP 25)**

Secretary to the Department of Defence [III] from 15 July 1927 to 16 November 1937.

**STARLING, J H (CP 28)**

Assistant Secretary (Territories) in the Prime Minister's Department from May 1929 to 2 February 1933. Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department and the Department of External Affairs [II] from 2 February 1933 to 10 November 1935.

**WALTERS, H L**

Permanent Head of the Department of Public Works and Railways from 12 April 1926 to 7 March 1929.

## APPENDIX 4 GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Records about the provision of relief work for the unemployed were compiled by a number of Commonwealth Government agencies, some of which are briefly described here. Information on all Government agencies included in this guide can be obtained by searching RecordSearch using the CA (Commonwealth Agency) number provided.

### **The Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)**

(Established 1 July 1911, disbanded 12 March 1971)

The administrative responsibilities of this department were many and varied. Those related to the provision of relief work for the unemployed during the period 1930–35 include the following:

- Communication and liaison with all Federal departments with State, British, Dominion, and foreign governments and foreign consuls in Australia;
- Executive Council matters;
- Cabinet and parliamentary arrangements;
- Commonwealth functions;
- Royal Commissions;
- Commonwealth publicity, gazettes and statutes;
- migration and immigration;
- Territories;
- Commonwealth Grants Commission;
- Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Employment;
- Commonwealth (Economic) Development Branch; and
- science and industry.

Between 1930 and 1935 successive secretaries of the Prime Minister's Department identified the department's function as administrative rather than one of coordination or policy determination.

### **Federal Capital Territory Branch, Department of Home Affairs [III] (CA 756)**

(Established 1 January 1930, disbanded 31 December 1932)

This was a branch of the Department of Home Affairs charged with the administration of the Federal Capital Territory.

**Department of Works and Railways, Central Office (CA 14)**

(Established 14 November 1916, disbanded 12 April 1932).

By 1928 this department was responsible for the following functions:

- conveyance of members of Parliament and others;
- design and execution of engineering works;
- design, construction, additions, alteration and maintenance of public buildings;
- lands and surveys;
- properties transferred and acquired;
- public works;
- rental of buildings for Commonwealth purposes; and
- rivers, roads, and bridges.

This department was disbanded on 12 April 1932 and its functions, together with those of Department of Home Affairs [II] (CA 24) and Transport [I] (CA 26) which were disbanded on the same day, were assumed by the newly created Department of the Interior [I] (CA 27).

**Department of Home Affairs [II], Central Office (CA 24)**

(Established 10 December 1928, disbanded 12 April 1932)

Upon its establishment, this department assumed responsibility for nearly all the functions previously carried out by the Department of Home and Territories (CA 15). Functions of immediate interest in the provision of relief work for the unemployed during the period 1930–35 include the following:

- Australian War Memorial;
- census and statistics;
- forestry, including administration of the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau and the Australian Forestry School;
- immigration restrictions;
- indentured coloured labour;
- Northern Territory;
- prospecting for precious metals; and
- Seat of Government – this function included the Federal Capital Territory Commission which was abolished in 1930 when its functions were largely transferred to the FCT Branch of the Department of Home Affairs.

The Department of Home Affairs was disbanded on 12 April 1932 upon its amalgamation with the departments of Home Affairs, Transport [I] (CA 26) and Works and Railways (CA 14) to form the new Department of the Interior [I] (CA 27).

**Attorney-General's Department, Central Office (CA 5)**

(Established 1 January 1901)

This department has wide-ranging responsibilities for the administration of justice and for law enforcement. Between 1928 and 1940 the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department was also the Permanent Head of the Department of Industry (CA 22) whose functions included employment and industrial matters. During that time, therefore, the Attorney-General's Department was involved in the provision of relief work for the unemployed.

**Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration (CA 27)**

(Established 12 April 1932, disbanded 26 April 1939)

This department had some involvement in the provision of relief work to the unemployed since it was created by an amalgamation of the Department of Home Affairs [II] (CA 24), the Department of Transport [I] (CA 26) and the Department of Works and Railways (CA 14). The new department took over all the functions of the former Department of Home Affairs [II] with the exception of those relating to census and statistics; all the functions of the former Department of Works and Railways; and those functions of the former Department of Transport [I] concerned with internal transport, war service homes and waterside employment.

**Department of External Affairs [III], Central Office (CA 18)**

(Established 21 December 1921, disbanded 6 November 1970)

Until 1935 this department was linked administratively to the Prime Minister's Department (CA 12), with the Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department acting as the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs. The Department of External Affairs was responsible for foreign affairs, foreign intelligence, foreign press and international conferences. From these activities information was gathered at times on the effectiveness of measures taken overseas to counter unemployment.

**Department of Defence [II], Central Administration (CA 19)**

(Established 21 December 1921, disbanded 13 November 1939)

This department, while responsible for defence force matters in general, operated a number of factories producing munitions, small arms and uniforms. At various times during the Great Depression demands were made of the Department of Defence to provide accommodation, fuel, clothing and relief work for the unemployed.



## APPENDIX 5 FURTHER READING

### Books

Bolton, G C. *A Fine Country to Starve in*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1972.

Broomhill, R. *Unemployed Workers: A Social History of the Great Depression in Adelaide*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978.

Cooksey, R. (ed). *The Great Depression in Australia*, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Canberra, 1970.

Cooksey, R. *Lang and Socialism: A Study in the Great Depression*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1971.

Louis, L J and Turner, I. *The Depression of the 1930s*, Cassell, Melbourne, 1968.

Lyons, E. *So We Take Comfort*, William Heinemann, London, 1965.

Mackinolty, J. (ed). *The Wasted Years?: Australia's Great Depression*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1981.

Richardson, L. *The Bitter Years: Wollongong During the Great Depression*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1984.

Robertson J. *J H Scullin: A Political Biography*, University of Western Australia Press, Adelaide, 1974.

Schedvin, C B. *Australia and the Great Depression: A Study of Economic Development and Policy in the 1920s and 1930s*, Sydney University Press in association with Oxford University Press (South Melbourne), 1970, revised 1988.

Snooks, G D. *Depression and Recovery in Western Australia 1928/29–38/39*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1974.

Spenceley, G. *The Depression Decade: Commentary and Documents*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1981.

### Journal Articles

Bland, F A. 'Unemployment Relief In Australia', *International Labour Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, July 1934.

Colley, A G. 'Unemployment Relief in New South Wales', *Australian Quarterly*, vol. xi, no. 2, June 1939.

### Theses

Hart, P R. *J A Lyons: A Political Biography*, unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1967.

Mitchell, P G. *Social Aspects of the Depression in New South Wales 1930–34*, unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1964.



## APPENDIX 6 OTHER GUIDES TO THE COLLECTION

The Archives creates and maintains guides to records in the collection to help researchers identify and locate records relevant to their research. The guides currently available or in preparation are listed below.

### Research guides

- 1 *Chinese Immigrants and Chinese-Australians in NSW*, by Julie Stacker and Peri Stewart, revised 1997, 80 pp.
- 2 *Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: The Royal Commission and Its Records, 1987–1991*, by Peter Nagle and Richard Summerrell, revised 1997, 92 pp.
- 3 *The Sinking of HMAS Sydney: A Guide to Commonwealth Government Records*, by Richard Summerrell, 3rd ed., 1999, 191 pp.
- 4 *Papua New Guinea records 1883–1942: Microfilm Collections*, by Peter Nagle, 1998, 136 pp.
- 5 *Royalty and Australian Society: Records Relating to the British Monarchy held in Canberra*, by Kate Cumming, 1998, 140 pp.
- 6 *Parliament House, Canberra, 1927: Records Relating to the Design, Construction and Opening of the Provisional Parliament House*, by Gay Hogan, 1997, 74 pp.
- 7 *More People Imperative: Immigration to Australia, 1901–39*, by Dr Michele Langfield, 1999, 236 pp.
- 8 *Collections in Melbourne: A Concise Guide*, by Celia Blake, 1998, 76 pp.
- 9 *The Boer War: Australians and the War in South Africa, 1899–1902*, by Craig Wilcox, 1999; revised 2000, 94 pp.
- 10 *Citizenship in Australia: A Guide to Commonwealth Government Records*, by David Dutton, 1999, 114 pp.
- 11 *Good British Stock: Child and Youth Migration*, by Barry Coldrey, 1999, 220 pp.
- 12 *Safe Haven: Records of the Jewish Experience in Australia*, by Malcolm J Turnbull, 1999, 170 pp.
- 13 *Cockatoo Island Dockyard: A Guide to the Records*, by Margaret Chambers, 2000, 252 pp.
- 14 *Collections in Perth: A Guide to Commonwealth Records*, by Dan Midalia, 2000, 182 pp.



## Forthcoming guides (working titles)

Australian-Indonesian Relations

Photographic Collections in the National Archives

Copyright Collections in the National Archives

Sound Collections in the National Archives

Postwar Migration to Australia - Records Held in Melbourne

Northern Territory Land Records

Security Intelligence in Australia, 1946-68

Australia and the Japanese: The First Two Hundred Years

World War II Internment Records

Transcontinental Railway Records

## Other guides

*Finding Families: The Guide to the National Archives of Australia for Genealogists*, compiled by Margaret Chambers, National Archives of Australia in association with Hale & Iremonger, Alexandria, NSW, 1998, 344 pp.

*Federation: The Guide to Records*, compiled by Stephen Foster, Susan Marsden and Roslyn Russell, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 1998, 377 pp.

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Commonwealth Records: A Guide to Records in the Australian Archives ACT Regional Office*, compiled by Ros Fraser, AGPS, Canberra, 1993, 478 pp.

*My Heart Is Breaking: A Joint Guide to Records about Aboriginal People in the Public Record Office of Victoria and the Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office*, by Myrna Deverall and Ian MacFarlane, AGPS, Canberra, 1993, 191 pp.

## APPENDIX 7 ADDRESSES AND HOURS OF OPENING

### Australia-wide addresses

National Archives of Australia  
PO Box 7425  
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610

#### General inquiries

Tel: (02) 6212 3600  
Fax: (02) 6212 3699  
Email: archives@naa.gov.au

#### Reference inquiries

Tel: (02) 6212 3900  
Fax: (02) 6212 3999  
Email: ref@naa.gov.au

#### WWI Personnel Records Service

*(this is a mail-order service only)*

PO Box 7425  
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610

Tel: (02) 6212 3400  
Fax: (02) 6212 3499  
Email: ww1prs@naa.gov.au

#### TTY Service

*(for callers with impaired speech or hearing)*  
(02) 6212 3689

Addresses	Hours of opening	Extended hours/services
<p><b>Canberra</b> Queen Victoria Terrace Parkes ACT 2600 Tel: (02) 6212 3900 Fax: (02) 6212 3999 Email: ref@naa.gov.au</p> <p>PO Box 7425 Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610</p>	<p>Reading rooms 9.00 am – 4.30 pm weekdays. 9.00 am – 4.30 pm Saturdays.</p> <p>Exhibition galleries 9.00 am – 5.00 pm every day (except Christmas Day and Good Friday).</p>	<p>Open until 9.00 pm each Tuesday. Items for evening use must be ordered by 6.30 pm.</p>
<p><b>Sydney</b> 120 Miller Road Chester Hill NSW 2162 Tel: (02) 9645 0110 Fax: (02) 9645 0108 Email:ref@naa.gov.au TTY: (02) 9743 8419</p> <p>Locked Bag 4 Chester Hill NSW 2162</p>	<p>9.00 am – 4.30 pm weekdays. 10.00 am – 4.00 pm on selected Saturdays (usually the last Saturday of the month). No new item issues after 3.00 pm on Saturdays.</p>	<p>Will remain open until 5.00 pm on weekdays by prior arrangement (new item issues or payment facilities not available).</p>
<p>Sydney Records Centre 2 Globe Street The Rocks</p>	<p>9.00 am – 5.00 pm weekdays</p>	<p>Duty reference staff can provide advice about National Archives holdings and assist you in using the RecordSearch database. Original records are not held at this location.</p>

<p><b>Melbourne</b> Melbourne Archives Centre Casselden Place 2 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Tel: (03) 9285 7999 Fax: (03) 9285 7979 Email: ref@naa.gov.au</p> <p>PO Box 8005 Burwood Heights VIC 3151</p>	<p>9.00 am – 4.30 pm weekdays.  9.00 am – 4.30 pm second and last Saturday of each month. Allow 48 hours for retrieval of items. There is no delivery of records from the repository on Saturdays.</p>	<p>The Archives operates a joint reading room with the Public Record Office of Victoria (PRO). Material from both archives may be viewed in the Casselden Place reading room. Different access arrangements and charging regimes apply to PRO material. Information explaining the differences is available in the reading room or can be sent prior to a visit.</p>
<p><b>Brisbane</b> 996 Wynnum Road Cannon Hill QLD 4170 Tel: (07) 3249 4202 Fax: (07) 3399 6589 Email: ref@naa.gov.au</p> <p>PO Box 552 Cannon Hill QLD 4170</p>	<p>9.00 am – 4.30 pm weekdays.  10.00 am – 4.00 pm on Saturdays as shown.  Reference services are limited during the lunch hour (12.30 – 1.30 pm).</p>	<p>Will remain open until 5.30 pm on weekdays by prior arrangement.</p>
<p><b>Perth</b> 384 Berwick Street East Victoria Park WA 6101 Tel: (08) 9470 7500 Fax: (08) 9470 2787 Email: ref@naa.gov.au</p> <p>PO Box 1144 East Victoria Park WA 6981</p>	<p>9.00 am – 4.30 pm weekdays.</p>	<p>Not available</p>
<p><b>Adelaide</b> 11–13 Derlanger Ave Collinswood SA 5081 Tel: (08) 8269 0121 Fax: (08) 8269 3234 Email: ref@naa.gov.au</p> <p>PO Box 119 Walkerville SA 5081</p>	<p>9.00 am – 4.30 pm weekdays.  Reading room will normally close for lunch (12.30 – 1.30 pm), but may remain open by arrangement.</p>	<p>Opening hours may be extended by arrangement, with limited services available.</p>
<p><b>Hobart</b> 4 Rosny Hill Road Rosny Park, TAS 7018 Tel: (03) 6244 0101 Fax: (03) 6244 6834 Email: ref@naa.gov.au</p> <p>PO Box 510 Rosny Park TAS 7018</p>	<p>9.00 am – 4.00 pm weekdays.  Reading room will normally close for lunch (12.30 – 1.30 pm), but may remain open by arrangement.</p>	<p>Will remain open until 5.00 pm by prior arrangement.</p>

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**Darwin**

Kelsey Crescent  
Millner NT 0810  
Tel: (08) 8948 4622  
Fax: (08) 8948 0276  
Email: [ref@naa.gov.au](mailto:ref@naa.gov.au)

9.00 am – 4.00 pm weekdays.

Open until 7.00 pm on the  
second Wednesday of each  
month.

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PO Box 24  
Nightcliff NT 0810