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A MINER'S RIGHTS

The Gold Prospecting Subsidy Scheme in Central Otago 1931 - 1935

BRIGID A. GOYEN

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Postgraduate Diploma of Arts in History at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

October 1983
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Lastly I wish to thank my supervisor Associate-Professor Erik Olssen whose guidance was much appreciated.
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Goldmine -

"a hole in the ground owned by a liar."

Mark Twain
INTRODUCTION

The Hope of our Country

To the people of Central Otago the gold price rise in 1931 was the forerunner of a return to the nineteenth century golden age. They began to speak fervently of the imminent mining revival. The local people did not doubt that the area, and especially the bed of the Molyneux River harboured tremendous riches.

The writer of the "Local and General" column in The Dunstan Times gave an indication of the tide of opinion. In January 1931 he asked, "Is there a silver lining to the dark cloud of depression through which we are passing?"1. In reply he proposed a gold lining of a 33 1/3% Government subsidy for miners, and suggested that the Mines Department utilise the knowledge of old miners.2.

In the winter of 1930 the gates at the head of the Kawarau River were closed. This plus a series of hard frosts caused the Molyneux River to run at a very low level. The "Local and General" columnist was affronted to find that old times were not being duplicated. He wrote:

Time was when under such conditions the river banks would have been lined with men in quest of gold. There is still plenty of the precious metal to be obtained, but where are the men? And there are thousands of unemployed in the country.3.

2. Ibid
3. Ibid, 7 June 1930.
A week later this view was qualified; despite the low level of the river, "the experience in the Clyde Gorge is that the Chinese did not leave much behind".4.

Although one party reputedly found a rich strike below Alexandra the general impression was, at least at this stage, that reworking land was not going to be as profitable as originally thought.

The movement in favour of an expansion of gold-mining was continued in an editorial in The Dunstan Times on 14 September 1931. It was dramatically stated that the services of all experienced miners should be requisitioned by the state to take charge of parties of men to "go out in search of the precious metal on the finding of which so much depends". The editor believed the gold resources of the country to be barely "scratched", and that thousands of unemployed could be profitably employed in the search for gold.5.

This belief in the riches of Central Otago as being sufficient to pay back the national debt led to increased activity amongst those interested, or with interests in gold-mining.6.

The press found that gold-mining was surrounded by an aura of mystique that made good copy.

The Roxburgh miners presented the Minister of Mines with two parcels of gold as a gesture of their appreciation of his interest in mining, and to let him know that there was gold in

4. Ibid, 14 June 1930
5. Ibid, 14 September 1930
Central Otago. The Minister was reported to be overcome by the gesture. This could be attributed to either the symbolic manner with which the miners expressed their sentiments, or the dramatic rise in the price of gold the previous month. The Minister gave credit for his mining involvement to the Kawarau Company, and a donation to help miners in need. 7.

Local groups tabled petitions in Parliament asking for the initiation of a mining scheme. Numerous gold mining associations were formed and theories as to how the gold best be extracted were propounded and unanimously supported at local meetings. These proposals were then forwarded to the Government for urgent action to be taken.

A proposal for the placing of weirs at the outlets of Lakes Hawea and Wanaka, so that the bed of the Molyneux River could be uncovered, was sponsored by A. Ashworth and received wide local attention and support. In support of the proposal the editor of The Alexandra Herald noted that the use of New Zealand produced materials would create employment. The value of employment within the community and the productive nature of the work was stressed in the editorial. Gold and irrigation were to be produced. 8.

William Bodkin, Member of Parliament for Central Otago, supported the motion but was sceptical of the reaction it would get from the Government, especially since the attempt in 1925-1926 to dewater the Kawarau River by damming its

7. Ibid, 10 October 1932, No indication of value of gold given.
8. The Alexandra Herald, 16 November 1932.
headwaters had failed. The Kawarau Scheme had cost £100,000. It had failed as the tributaries of the river below the dam had maintained water in the riverbed. The Ashworth proposal was a similar scheme of a speculative nature. Bodkin also felt that the cost would be closer to £200,000 than £100,000. The labour costs would be met by the U.B. but a loan would be needed to meet the cost of materials. Bodkin said that in his experience material costs were two thirds of the total costs involved.9

Representations on the Ashworth proposals were made in a remit from the 1932 Mining Associations Conference to Government, to the Minister of Mines in 1933,10 and in 1934 to Prime Minister George Forbes when he visited Central Otago,11 but authorisation for the proposals was continually refused. As the Public Works Department had no objections to the proposals the refusal appears to have been based mainly on the failure of the Kawarau dam and the Government's reluctance to become involved in another speculative scheme.

Within Parliament support for gold-mining was given by Bodkin, G. C. C. Black, Member for Motueka and Mark Fagan, an ex-miner.12

On 17 July 1931 Bodkin spoke in the House of Representatives on the opportunities presented to gold-mining through the positive exchange rate that existed between Australia and

New Zealand which gave a £1 return on each ounce of gold. He encouraged assistance to prospectors and supported the miners in their claim that restrictions placed on the assistance given would barr those with expertise from the field. 13. Black felt that New Zealand could do well to follow the lead taken by the New South Wales Government that had already begun subsidising gold prospecting by the unemployed. 14.

The early 1930's therefore saw Central Government facing a barrage of agitation from a strong Parliamentary lobby and an excited local community that saw gold-mining as "the hope of our country". 15.

14. Woods, p.44.
CHAPTER 1

GRUBSTAKING

Government reaction to the rising unemployment from 1926 onwards was piecemeal. It avoided acceptance of full responsibility for unemployment relief, expecting local bodies and hospital boards to share the burden. In 1930 a Special Committee on unemployment reported that measures previously implemented had been insufficient to deal permanently with increasing unemployment. They recommended that a central body be set up to co-ordinate relief work of a productive nature, which could be funded by an unemployment levy.

Under the terms of the Unemployment Act, October 1930, the Unemployment Board (U.B.) was set up. The U.B. undertook to provide work for registered unemployed in conjunction with local bodies. The largest of the work schemes was the No. 5 Scheme which attempted to provide some form of immediate relief work for all unemployed men. As there were large numbers of men involved, the U.B. had difficulty finding enough constructive work.

By March 1931 there were 38,000 registered unemployed.

As a result, financial provisions (which had been formulated to support a maximum of only 15,000 relief workers) were not sufficient to meet the needs of the U.B. Attempts to economise included a wage reduction, and the suspension of the No. 5 Scheme for a financial review in April 1931. A further suspension of the No. 5 Scheme in June 1931 was only averted by strong public pressure. On 22 July 1931 the Unemployment Amendment Act was passed to provide additional funds. The U.B.'s position had not improved by August 1931. Hence the U.B. considered methods of further reducing expenditure, and of providing productive work as recommended by the Special Committee on Unemployment. ³

In this financial climate the U.B. looked at the mining industry.

Since World War 1, when the Imperial Government had asked New Zealand to stop exporting gold, gold-mining had become a depressed industry. ⁴ Low gold prices had made mining economically unviable. With the easy gold gone, extraction costs were higher than the return. A more favourable return was needed before a reappraisal of the situation was justified.

This opportunity came with the worldwide slump. On 31 September 1931 Great Britain went off the gold standard. Immediately the price of gold rose from 85s per ounce to

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105s per ounce, and continued to fluctuate thereafter.\textsuperscript{5} A rise in gold prices coupled with the availability of cheap labour meant that the gold-mining industry could be reviewed.

The Government, while being attracted by the possible economic benefits from gold-mining, was aware of the unpredictable nature of the industry. In 1929 W. A. Veitch, the Minister of Mines and Labour, visited Central Otago. He gave his support to the local movement that was pressing for assistance and encouragement to be given to prospecting. Veitch also warned that confidence was needed within the industry.\textsuperscript{6} A year later he again visited Central Otago and reiterated his concern saying that "there was prejudice against mining, and what was needed was to establish confidence".\textsuperscript{7} This was before the sharp rise in the price of gold in September 1931. Initial concerns about the speculative nature of gold-mining were eclipsed when the Government realised that the cheap and plentiful labour supply, in conjunction with a rise in price, had made gold one of the few economically viable products. As an alternative to the high cost, low return sustenance payments being made by the U.B. under the No. 5 Scheme, gold-mining could no longer be ignored.

As well as economic incentives, gold-mining was

\textsuperscript{5} The Dunstan Times, (D.T.), 14 March, 1932.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, 8 April, 1929.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, 25 March, 1930.
attractive in that it was productive and would utilise areas of mineral bearing land that were unsuitable for the U.B. farming schemes. It also provided employment for the urban unemployed in rural areas. After riots in three of the four main centres in 1932, and a riotous strike in the fourth, the Government was anxious to defuse the tense situation by encouraging single men to seek work on relief schemes in rural areas.⁸

Ostensibly assistance was offered to men to prospect for gold so that they could become independent of unemployment relief. However, the U.B. required that such assistance be repaid by a percentage of gold won. The assistance was referred to as the subsidy and those receiving it as subsidised miners (as opposed to free miners). In this way the subsidy paid was to be recovered and used again by the U.B.⁹ The Government also hoped to gain revenue from the gold export duty that was payable on all gold sold, as well as the general effect of a gold induced cash flow throughout the country.

Unemployed labour was first used for gold prospecting in February 1931. The Mines Department was granted £2000 by the U.B. for the employment of men to prospect in Northern Westland under the No. 5 Scheme. Thirty parties of ninety-one men were employed until April 1931 when the grant was

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⁸. This view was expressed in all of the four interviews with miners.
exhausted. 10.

In November 1931 gold prospecting was again undertaken by the U.B. Although prospectors were still under the No. 5 Scheme, with increasing commitment to gold-mining a separate division was developed, the Gold Prospecting Subsidy Scheme, hereafter called the Scheme. 11. By May 1932 the Scheme had acquired three forms. Scheme 8A provided for parties of unemployed men led by an experienced miner. 12. Under Scheme 8B existing mining companies were encouraged to take on new employees whose wages were subsidised by the U.B. These subsidised wages had to be repaid before dividends were paid to shareholders. 13. The third section was the assistance to prospectors under the No. 5 Scheme.

For administrative purposes the U.B. asked the county councils in those areas affected by gold prospecting to establish mining executive committees. 14. Within Otago a district mining executive was established. It was responsible to the Maniototo, Tuapeka Lake and Vincent County Councils. 15. The executives were to select areas for the

11. Term used by Woods.
13. Ibid
men to work, provide access to the workings, deal with relief payments and make grants of equipment where needed. As they were under the control of the U.B. a half-yearly report had to be submitted to the U.B. giving details of numbers employed and their gold returns.

With the extension of the Scheme to attract urban unemployed experienced supervision was needed. The U.B. made provision for the executives to appoint supervisors from the registered unemployed, where there were 35 to 60 miners working in one area. The supervisors were to control and instruct the men in the best methods of mining and prospecting. Failure to obey the supervisor could result in the subsidy being withdrawn. In accord with their responsibility supervisors were paid £110s per week, more than the prospector.

Separate financial provisions were made for the gold

17. Ibid, p.57.
18. Ibid, p.60. (The miners appear to have been unaware of the organisational structure behind the Scheme, regarding the Certifying Officer, G. Burrows as the sole administrator.)
20. AJHR, 1932-1933, H-35, p.18. (Also Mines Department assisted with choosing suitable mining localities.)
prospectors. A subsidy of 30s per week for married men and 15s per week for single men was paid.\(^{22}\)

On receiving the subsidy the miner signed an agreement to repay it by 10% of all gold won. If a single man gained up to £2 of gold per week, or £3 for a married man, the subsidy was discontinued. An endorsement was made on the mining right of the subsidised miner so that the 10% deduction was removed automatically if the gold was sold to a licensed gold buyer.\(^{23}\)

The gold prospectors and No. 11 Scheme rabbiters were the only unemployed men required to pay back the money they received from the U.B.

In addition to the subsidy, equipment was provided for a miner if he was unable to supply his own.\(^{24}\) This was to be repaid by a further endorsement of 50% on his Miners' Right.\(^{25}\) The equipment remained the property of the U.B. until completely paid off.\(^{26}\) Fares to the mining area, tools and tents were included in the advance.\(^{27}\) If money was lent to buy food and clothing, repayments were deducted from the subsidy.\(^{28}\)

\(^{22}\) AJHB, 1932-1933, H-35, p.18. (Subsidy increased, 28 October 1935 to 32s 6d for married men and 17s 6d for single men, Woods pp. 84-85.)

\(^{23}\) Woods, pp. 51-52.

\(^{24}\) Gold pan, pick and shovel.

\(^{25}\) Woods, p. 52.

\(^{26}\) Ibid

\(^{27}\) Ibid

\(^{28}\) Ibid, p.62.
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Receipt of the fee of five shillings is hereby acknowledged.

Dated and issued at CROMWELL, this 1 day of October, 1932.

Miner's Right - William Kilgour

Note: Endorsement on bottom example (R. Kilgour)

To Licensed Gold Dealers: Please deduct and pay to the Public Account 5s. of the proceeds of the sale of the Miner's Right.

Miner's Right, New Zealand

Not Extending to Native Ceded Land

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Receipt of the fee of five shillings is hereby acknowledged.

Dated and issued at CROMWELL, this 62 day of October, 1931.

Miners Right - William Kilgour

Note: Endorsement on bottom example (R. Kilgour)
Miners were also required to pay an insurance premium of 6d per week for married men, 3d per week for single men. The first payment was to be made before the subsidy was granted. Later payments were deducted from the subsidy. 29.

Apart from prospecting there were other mining related employment opportunities created. Track workers cut and maintained access tracks used by miners. Packmen carried supplies. Race construction or clearing was needed to provide water for sluicing. These workers received special rates of pay which they did not have to repay. 30.

It was imperative that the miners had water for sluicing operations. In Central Otago the Public Works Department (PWD) offered to supply surplus water to miners for a charge of 10% on all gold won. The supply was to be at the convenience of the Department, preference being given to farming interests in season. No extension of the existing system was made so the amount of water supplied was subject to the capacity of the system to supply it. Requirements of individual miners were limited to a "reasonable" quantity, determined by the amount of water used by other miners. 31. After January 1935 this agreement was withdrawn and replaced by a charge of 2½d per head of water used. 32.

29. Ibid
30. Ibid, passim.
32. Memorandum Lindup, Resident Engineer, PWD, Alexandra to H. H. Wood, Head Raceman, P.W. Naseby, 7 January 1935. (Copy forwarded to Maniototo County Gold Miners' Association.)
This was the basic scheme introduced on a large scale in 1932. In theory the Scheme appeared reasonably attractive, especially as an alternative to the mundane and often demeaning relief work available in the cities. The Scheme as it operated however was ill and hastily conceived. Economic factors overrode those of human needs so that gold prospecting became a bitter experience for many.

In its haste to inaugurate the Scheme the Government did not thoroughly investigate the economics of gold-mining. At an early stage it was stated by G. C. C. Black, Member of Parliament for Motueka, and a supporter of the Scheme, that the D.S.I.R. and modern technology must be utilised, "science must be their handmaid".\(^{33}\). It was not until 1935 that the Government sponsored a scientific approach to gold-mining.

As large numbers of "city boys" began to register on the Scheme the theory and practical implementation began to diverge.\(^{34}\).

Although provision had been made, in the first requirements drawn up, for a check on physical fitness many of those city dwellers who joined the Scheme were unaccustomed to the heavy work that mining entailed, or the harsh weather conditions in areas such as Central Otago. A report in the Dunstan Times (D.T.) stressed that the men who were succeeding were not the average unemployed but were "invariably good bush men who thrived on what most people

\(^{33}\) Woods, pp. 44-45.

\(^{34}\) Phrase from Interview with Mr G. Irwin, 16 Tainui Road, Dunedin, 17 August 1983.
consider hardships.\textsuperscript{35}

The supervisors complained about the poor physical condition of the men.\textsuperscript{36} The Vincent Hospital Board (VHB) dealt with a miner from Auckland, Cooksey, who was in such a frail state of health that he was admitted to Cromwell Hospital.\textsuperscript{37} As his ill health was of long-standing and not related to mining the Board decided to send him back to Auckland.\textsuperscript{38} E. L. Richardson of Omakau was also in bad health. A married man with two small children he was granted medical assistance. The VHB declined financial help, suggesting that Richardson register as unemployed so that he could obtain work on the Scheme.\textsuperscript{39}

As well as being physically unprepared the new miners were often ignorant of mining methods. The demonstration of cradling and sluicing in St Andrew Street was probably the only mining experience that most of the Dunedin youths had before reaching their claims. The Government did make provision for the appointment of men to supervise and guide the miners, but they were not well chosen. Most of the supervisors knew little more than those they were supposed to guide, as well as being inefficient and neglecting their duties.\textsuperscript{40} Most knowledge was gleaned from the other miners

\textsuperscript{35} D.T., 18 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{36} Woods, p.65.
\textsuperscript{37} VHB Minute Book, 15/11/33.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 21/2/34.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, Special Meeting 27/5/32.
\textsuperscript{40} Woods, p.65, and Interviews.
rather than from supervisors. The locally organised mining associations appear to have recognised at an early stage that the subsidised miners would need guidance. In a letter to the Inspector of Mines the President of the Naseby Miners' Association, W. Smith, suggested that experienced miners be engaged as instructors and inspectors. At this stage there were fourteen such miners at the Kyeburn Diggings who had apparently already been taken under the wing of the local miners. MacMillan replied that supervisors could only be appointed where there were 35 to 60 miners working in one area. A void therefore existed for the provision of supervision for smaller groups of miners.

The Government engineers also kept a low profile. Miners appear to have been directed to areas largely by word of mouth. Only one of my interviewees was directed to an area by the U.B. (This was Branch Creek, Cardrona.) After leaving there he made his way to new areas of his own accord.

Many of the areas that the subsidised miners worked had already been worked before, often by both European and Chinese. If gold was still present in these areas it was not able to be extracted by the tin, pick and shovel used by subsidised miners.

At the Cardrona there was dissatisfaction due to the lack of gold won. Despite early warnings by experienced miners

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41. Smith to MacMillan, 14 March 1932. (H.C.)
42. MacMillan to Smith, 24 March 1932. (H.C.)
43. Irwin Interview.
that the Cardrona field was exhausted, seventy miners arrived in the district in July 1932.\textsuperscript{44} D.T. enthusiastically reported that "the hitherto dead atmosphere surrounding the Cardrona has taken an uplift", but after thirteen weeks only three ounces of gold had been won.\textsuperscript{45} The \textit{Evening Star} referred to the field as "the tragi-comedy at Cardrona".\textsuperscript{46} Relations between the supervisor and miners became strained and criticism of the field at the September 1932 Mining Associations Converence in Cromwell was harsh.\textsuperscript{47} By 16 November 1932 the A.H. reported a general exodus of miners to other areas. These included the Old Man Range and Fraser River.

The financial provisions of the Scheme were based largely on the expectation that the miners would win sufficient gold to become independent of relief. There was an emphasis on the repayment aspect of the Scheme and therefore deductions were heavy.

Deductions made from the gold won were the 10% subsidy, 50% equipment grant, 10% to PWD for water supply and 12/6 per ounce gold export duty. The deductions from the subsidy were an insurance premium, an unemployment tax, and in the case of married men at least 50% of the subsidy was sent to the family.\textsuperscript{48} If money for food or clothing had been

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{44} A.H., 16 November 1932.
  \item \textsuperscript{45} D.T., 18 July 1932.
  \item \textsuperscript{46} A.H., 16 November 1932.
  \item \textsuperscript{47} See Chapter 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{48} Woods, p.66.
\end{itemize}
BANK OF NEW ZEALAND.

OMAKAU 13 APR 1933

GOLD DUST OR BULLION PURCHASED.

From

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13 APR 1933

GOLD RECEIPT - from Bank of New Zealand

(W. J. Walker) Omakau
advanced to the miner this too was deducted.

Payments were also due to the county council for rent on the mining claim. This increased over a number of years from 2/6 in the first year to 7/6 in the third year.

A miner could therefore find himself with very little to live on after the payment had been made.

Any gold won was supposed to be sold through a licensed gold buyer, usually the local banks. The deductions were made by the gold buyer before payment was made.

The deductions from gold won were intensely disliked by the miners, many of whom actively evaded paying. Several methods were used. These were selling gold to a free miner, selling to an unlicensed gold buyer, or purchasing another Miners' Right under an assumed name. Using this last method the subsidy was claimed using one Miners' Right while the other, which was not endorsed, was used for selling gold. In order to remain on the subsidy a miner would regulate the amount of gold he sold so as not to go over the limit allowed.

It appears that illegal gold buyers were well known in the areas in which they operated. Two of my interviewees were aware of a person in Alexandra who was buying gold illegally.

It was common knowledge that he would pay more than the official price for gold. He appeared to do well.

The miners were handicapped by their lack of any

49. Woods, passim.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight Before Melting</th>
<th>Weight After Melting</th>
<th>Loss in Melting</th>
<th>Scraps</th>
<th>Assay</th>
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<td>24 JUL 1934</td>
<td>1910 oz.</td>
<td>1916 oz.</td>
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**Bank of New Zealand**

CROMWELL, 24 JUL 1934

Lodged as per Slip therewith

£4 2s. 9d.

Sum of forty three pound shillings

Premium will be advised on receipt of mint outturn.

**Assay Certificate and Bank Receipt**

(R. Kilgour)
equipment beyond the pan, pick and shovel provided by the U.B., or money with which to buy it. Where a miner found payable gold it was usually necessary for him to develop his claim using more sophisticated equipment. There was no provision made for these costs within the basic U.B. grant. In some cases a subsidised miner worked with a free miner. As the free miner often provided the equipment concern was expressed when in November 1932 the U.B. prohibited free and subsidised miners working together. In some cases a subsidised miner worked with a free miner. As the free miner often provided the equipment concern was expressed when in November 1932 the U.B. prohibited free and subsidised miners working together.51. The subsidised miner had no ready means of replacing the equipment with that of his own. Those who did borrow money had difficulty making repayments.52.

In September 1933 of the 3900 miners on the subsidy 34% (1350) were in Central Otago.53. The Vincent County Mining Executive Report for the six month period ending 30 June 1933 stated that there were 730 men on the Scheme in Vincent County alone. Of these 480 were single, and 250 married men (possibly with families). The average number of men on the Scheme for each month during the six month period had risen from 433 in January to 754 in June,54. (the average for the period being 609 men).55. They were scattered widely over the county, with larger settlements in Cromwell, Omakau, Alexandra and Clyde.

51. A.H., 16 November 1932.
52. See Chapter 2.
54. Mines Department, Employment Division and Unemployment Board Files (MDUB), 11/7/3, Part 1.
55. Ibid, Vincent County Mining Executive Report for period ending 30 June 1933. See Appendix I.
More miners, some 220, lived in Cromwell than any other area.\textsuperscript{56}

As such large numbers of new people were entering the community the revival of mining associations by groups of interested people was inevitable. As the voice of the local community in mining matters the associations were quick to take on a watchdog role over U.B. policy. The flaws in the Scheme theory received their continued attention.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 30 June 1933.
CHAPTER 2
MINING ASSOCIATIONS

The mining associations\(^1\) were a union of business and mining interests keen to "promote the interests of the Gold Mining Industry in all its branches" (as stated in the rules of the Maniototo County Gold Miners' Association Inc.).

Founding members were keen to give practical help and encouragement to the subsidized miners that flocked to the gold-bearing areas. While being excited at the prospect of a mining revival, the association members harshly criticised the administration of the Scheme and agitated for change at local and national levels.

The U.B. did not recognise these Associations, with the exception of the Alexandra Miners' Association and Cromwell Mining Association. The Cromwell Association was the first to gain official status. This allowed them to accept subsidy applications so that delays were reduced.\(^2\) The Alexandra Association was encouraged by J. Ritchie, Chairman of the Vincent County Council and Vincent County Mining Executive, to also seek official status.\(^3\) It is evident that this was done as G. Burrows, Certifying Officer, attended a meeting

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1. Those Central Otago mining associations that I have found mentioned in correspondence are: Alexandra, Cardrona, Clyde, Cromwell, Lake County, Macraes, Maniototo (also called Naseby), Ophir, Roxburgh, St Bathans, Tuapeka (Roxburgh). Those not in Central Otago are Orepuki (Southland), Kumara, Reefton, Hokitika.

2. A.H., 16 November 1932.

3. Ibid
of the Alexandra Association, in July 1932, as a speaker. Burrows refused to address the Maniototo Association as it was not recognised officially.

The Naseby Miners' Association was established at a meeting held 27 February 1932. An association had existed previously as it was moved that the minutes of the former association be procured if possible. The first President was W. Smith, an insurance agent. The Vice-President and Secretary, T. Lennane and G. Brown respectively, were both miners. At the Annual General Meeting held 11 March 1933 Smith declined nomination for President due to other commitments. Instead, Lennane became President, with M. O'Donahue, also a miner, as Vice-President. J. Keogh, editor of the Mt Ida Chronicle, became Secretary-Treasurer, a position he held until 1940 when he left the district. In that time Keogh made a valuable contribution to the Association which made him difficult to replace.

The Naseby Association was quick to become involved with the unemployed miners. In a letter informing the Mines Department of the formation of the Naseby Miners' Association, Smith expressed concern at the number of 'new chum' miners entering the district who "have little or no experience of mining methods, and we are afraid may get disheartened and in all possibility drift back to whence they came unless something be done to give them a little instruction". He

4. Ibid
5. Maniototo County Gold Miners' Association Minute Book, (Man Mins), 8 July 1933.
obviously supported the new miners in taking the initiative because they appeared "to be earnest in their desire to do something for themselves rather than hang around the cities waiting for the 'dole'". The letter went on to suggest that experienced miners be engaged as inspectors and instructors.7

Until mid 1933 the Association could do little more than make representations to Government on behalf of the subsidized miners, and give practical advice. Apart from the membership fee of 2/6 per year there were no funds to use. This changed in May 1933 when Bodkin advised the Association that £1,500, part of the proceeds from the 'Great Easter' Alluvial Gold Art Union, were to be divided between Vincent, Lake, Tuapeka and Maniototo Counties. The £375 received by each county was to be used for making loans to miners for the purchase of plant and water race construction.

The 'Great Easter' Art Union (No. 22) was one of thirty-two art unions run for which the prize was alluvial gold. Six of the art unions were for gold valued at £4,000, the remaining twenty-six were for small quantities of gold. £10,000 was set aside from the six large art unions to be allocated for the relief of distress, not necessarily that arising only from unemployment.9 It was from this that the mining associations received their funds.

First mention of the money being available was made by Bodkin at a meeting of the Alexandra Association. The money

8. Bodkin to Keogh, 30 May 1933.
was to be used exclusively for unemployed miners, interest was not to exceed 4%, with ten years for repayment. These conditions were later modified by individual associations.

Receiving these funds called for changes to the role played by the Naseby Association.

The acceptance of the money means that the associations were required to meet conditions set by the Mines Department. The money was to be administered as a Common Fund by trustees appointed from the associations in each county. Applications were to be first dealt with by the local association, which would recommend those they considered worthy to the Central Board of Trustees. The Inspector of Mines, as an ex-officio member of the Board, was to recommend all applications before a loan was made. Bodkin encouraged the small associations in Lake, Tuapeka and Maniototo to amalgamate so that the funds were administered by a larger association which could become an Incorporated Society. Bodkin wrote to Keogh explaining that it was better to have "one big strong Association" rather than "small Associations scattered around the whole of the country". As the Cromwell and Alexandra Associations were both incorporated it is probable that in Vincent County the Funds were divided between the larger associations.

On the Maniototo only Naseby and St Bathans had formed associations. The Naseby Association, probably being the larger or more active, was advised by Bodkin to become an incorporated society, appoint trustees, and adopt rules so

10. D.T., 1 May 1933.
11. Bodkin to Keogh, 30 May 1933.
12. Ibid, 6 June 1933, (letter 1).
that they could administer the funds for the Maniototo County. To encourage the Association to accept the responsibility Bodkin provided an application form for incorporation, a copy of the Alexandra Association's rules, and a name, "the Maniototo County Miners' Association" [which they adopted in modified form].

The Naseby Association's members wasted no time in complying with Bodkin's request. At a regular meeting on 17 May 1933 a motion was carried "That this Association register as an Incorporated Society as the 'Maniototo County Gold Miners' Association Inc.'". The rules supplied by Bodkin were adopted and the President, Vice-President, Secretary and one other were made trustees. Provision was also made for an auditor.

The Maniototo Association was incorporated on 1 September 1933. The Art Union Funds were forwarded in mid September with the directive that:

The Hon. Minister desires me to emphasise the fact that the amount in question has been made available to your Association to enable claims to be developed which have been proved to be worth developing.

The Association therefore became involved in fiscal arrangements with members, the rules of which do not appear to have been entirely clear.

13. Ibid, 6 June 1933, (letter 2).
15. Man Mins, 17 May 1933.
16. Maniototo County Gold Miners' Association, Executive Committee Report, Man Mins for year ending 12 May 1934
17. Hammond and McArthur Ltd, Wellington to Keogh, 19 September 1933.
The initial requirements set down by the Mines Department had provided for the Inspector of Mines, as ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees, to recommend each application. When the Maniototo Association forwarded applications to the Inspector of Mines he referred them to the Department of Internal Affairs. When the Association approached Bodkin he replied: "The trouble is that these departments seem to lose themselves completely among their own regulations." It appears that the Mines Department did not want the responsibility of recommending loans that it had given itself. Bodkin went on to recommend that as long as the loan was for mining purposes, and that security was offered it could be considered. "The best thing to do is to adjust matters to meet the situation." The Association was therefore left to administer the fund with little outside interference. Loans were usually passed for payment if passed at a regular meeting of the Association. The Trustees were very rarely being used.

The essential requirements for a loan caused problems.

The Maniototo Association was first instructed that "It is absolutely essential that security should be taken in respect of all moneys advanced." This caused concern as subsidized miners simply could not provide security. When

18. Keogh to Bodkin, Maniototo County Gold Miners' Association Letterbook 1933-1934, 28 October 1933.
20. Ibid
21. Bodkin and Sutherland (Barristers and Solicitors), Alexandra, to Keogh, 26 September 1933.
discussed at a regular meeting, suggestions included renting equipment, with an option to buy, and using the equipment itself as security. Attention was drawn to the rough treatment given equipment by miners, also some equipment like canvas hosing was perishable. No definite decision was reached, the last word being had by Keogh, who stated that he felt the money was a gift to mining and that the Association should not adopt "Shylock principals" [sic].

In October 1934, the issue still being unresolved, it was decided to approach Bodkin for a definite pronouncement on the need for security. Bodkin replied with the suggestion that an agreement be prepared whereby the rent be considered as a hire purchase payment so that after a certain number of weeks the equipment became his. He stated: "The money was definitely intended to help impecunious miners" and that "It was not ever intended that the miner should be asked to provide additional security because very few are in the position to do so." The Association therefore had a directive on which it could base its' future dealings.

Loan repayments also became a major problem for the Association.

Miners were keen to take advantage of the loan money. Applications for loans were received even before the money was received. Miners who had previously refused to join the Association did so when they found that loans were available to members only. The small hard core of active members

22. Man Mins, 10 March 1934.
23. Bodkin to Keogh, 10 November 1934.
resented those miners who joined the Association only for financial gain. Although concern was expressed that hardship may be caused, a motion that a three month membership clause be placed on as a prerequisite to loan eligibility was passed.24.

In December 1933, and again in February 1934, the Association set the interest rate on loans at a minimum of 7½%.25. The loans were to have been repaid by regular instalments so that the fund was self renewing. As early as April 1934 concern was expressed at the marked depletion in funds. Despite a government placed maximum of £50 on each loan, the Association was generous and so the original capital was quickly depleted. An application to the Department of Internal Affairs for more money was 'placed on record', but no more assistance given. The Minister commented in reply that if the self renewing aspect of the original agreement was being adhered to the fund should not be exhausted.26.

The loan repayment system was not working. Many miners failed to make even the basic 7½% repayment. In June 1934 it was decided that miners who owed money to the Association be required to supply regular monthly returns of gold won to the secretary. This was not complied with.27. By July 1934

24. Man Mins, 10 March 1934.

25. This was higher than the 4% cited by the D.T., 1 May 1933 as being the maximum for loan repayments from the Art Union funds.

26. Minister of Mines replying for Minister of Internal Affairs to Keogh, 12 May 1934.

the Association had only £20 to its credit. The Executive Committee of the Association recommended that unless a "decided improvement" was made in paying back loans the machinery and plant would be repossessed. 28.

Those miners that were indebted to the Association were in many cases also indebted to the U.B. As an official organisation the U.B. had the amount of their repayments endorsed on the Miners' Right. The Association could not collect its debts so easily.

In reply to a letter requesting information of his work over the previous year, C. T. Knowles of Kyeburn Diggings, cited a debt of £14 to the U.B. which was automatically collected by a 50% endorsement on his Miners' Right. Knowles was involved with race cutting and dam construction for six months of the previous year and had then worked poor ground due to the absence of plant and the necessity for ready cash. He concluded by stating his intention to increase his payments from 71% to 15% in the following year, until he had reduced his debt to the Association. 29. H. Batchelor cited his indebtedness to the County (probably U.B.), 30. and lack of water supply as being reasons for falling behind in his repayments. 31.

The Association was therefore handicapped not only by its inability to collect money from penniless miners but

29. C. T. Knowles to Keogh, 1 February 1936.
because the U.B. had first call on any profits.

As they were already severely limited by lack of funds the Association was required to resort to the role of debt collector.

It is difficult to discover how many subsidized miners in the Maniototo area took advantage of the loans available. It is evident that those that did had difficulty in meeting repayments, as they were also in debt to the U.B. Unless miners were consistently winning gold it was difficult to remain solvent.

The mining associations were concerned with widely varying problems. The 10% deduction caused consistent concern.

The repayment of subsidies by a deduction of 10% on gold won by a subsidized miner served to enhance the Scheme in the eyes of the Government. From the onset it was regarded as an imposition upon the mining industry and was actively evaded by miners.

In Central Otago agitation for its' removal was strong. At the combined associations mining conference, 8 September 1932, a remit from the Cromwell Association stated,

That the imposition of 10% on all gold won by Unemployed Miners is unfair and an injustice to the men, and this Conference would respectfully point out that the men are invariably faced with expenses in the way of timbering, shooting, pumping and trucking etc.32.

This was carried. Delegates were concerned that the provision of plant took all of the miners' earnings and left

32. Notice of "Remits from Associations", H.C.
nothing for necessities. It was stated by William Jelley (Cromwell) that "those responsible for this imposition [10% deduction] knew very little about the needs of gold miners".33

On 5 December 1932 a combined deputation of Clyde, Alexandra and Ophir mining associations met J. S. Jessep, Deputy Chairman of the Unemployment Board. They brought up points raised at the mining conference, including the 10% deduction. The delegation emphasised that they asked for the removal of the deduction due to hardship, not for personal gain. Jessep declared that "There was no one more sympathetic with the miner than he". Then he propounded the view that "if the miner was lucky enough to strike good gold ten per cent was no hardship. Any miner who struck it rich should be prepared to pay back all his fellow citizens had supplied to give him his chance." The main thrust of his argument came with his admission that in urging the Scheme with Treasury officials, one of his main arguments was that they would get something back.34. It is interesting to speculate on whether Jessep would have considered himself rich if given £2 of gold, the amount needed to put a single man off the subsidy list.

The U.B. was uncompromising on the 10% issue as can be seen from this exchange between Jessep and Bodkin on the former's visit to Alexandra in 1934:

33. D.T., 19 September 1932.
34. Ibid, 5 December 1932.
Mr Bodkin: The unemployed have suggested to me that 10 per cent deduction from gold sales should, if possible, be rebated, particularly to those who are getting very small returns.

Mr Jessep: There is no general wish for that. We have discussed that again and again. The 10 per cent deductions are used to provide extra equipment for the men themselves. Its abolition would only hamper the whole scheme.

Mr Bodkin: There is strong feeling with the men over it.

Mr Jessep: It is news to us.

Mr Bodkin: Every Minister has been waited on and asked for it to be rebated.

Mr Jessep: I venture to say that, with all due respect to you, there is no general complaint amongst the miners.35.

I would venture to suggest that the miners sold their gold illegally, the mining associations being left to lay complaints in official circles. Hence the apparent contentment among miners.

Among the associations the Alexandra Association took the lead in denouncing the deduction and agitating for its abolition. The President of the Alexandra Association, H. Werner, interviewed government officials when in Wellington. He felt that if concerted action was taken the "inequitious imposition" would be taken care of. The Alexandra Association submitted a remit to the second combined associations conference which met in Alexandra on 28 July 1934, again

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calling for the deduction to be removed.\footnote{Taylor - Cannon, Secretary of Alexandra Association, 7 September 1933.}

The deduction was eventually removed on 11 October 1934.\footnote{A. J. Woods, "Depression Gold", p.72.} This was probably due to the combined agitation from in and outside of Central Otago.

In July 1933 anomalies created by the gold export duty tax were brought to the attention of the Maniototo Association. There were two problems. The first concerned the gold export duty which was charged on all gold sold, whether it was to be exported or not.\footnote{Man Mins, 13 July 1935.} The second concerned the provision of assay certificates.

The gold export duty was 12/6 per ounce of gold sold. Duty was charged to the miner on the amount of gold taken into the bank, but he was only paid the balance for the amount of gold which remained after it had been assayed. A case, cited by W. George, was that he paid gold duty on both gold and six ounces of impurities, but was paid by the bank only for the gold.\footnote{Ibid, 8 July 1933.}

Assay certificates were required to be provided by the exporter, under secion 8 of the Gold Duty Act 1908. Unless a miner sold his gold to a bank he was required to have his gold winnings assayed.\footnote{Minister of Finance to Bodkin, 13 September 1933.}

Both of these matters were taken up with Bodkin.

While much of the business conducted by the mining associations was on an individual basis, in 1932, and again in 1934, a mining conference was organised, at which a combined
association was established. The resulting associations were called the Otago Gold Miners' Association (1932) and the Otago-Southland Gold Miners' Association (1934). The latter included Southland as the Orepuki Gold Miners' Association was affiliated. The failure of the first conference to achieve any changes made the 1934 conference necessary.

The 1932 conference was initiated and organised by the Cromwell Association and Lake County Miners' Association. When approached by the Cromwell Association on the suggested conference, the secretary of the then Naseby Association, A. Brown, replied: "Our aims, our object, and our interests are identical." As the Association members had not been approached at that stage he extended the support of only the President and himself.

The Conference was convened on 8 September 1932 at Cromwell. Delegates from Lakes, Naseby, Alexandra, Cardrona and Cromwell attended. Roxburgh and St Bathans apologised for their absence as did the Inspector of Mines. Bodkin attended later in the proceedings. The Chairman was R. G. Varcoe, and the Secretary was J. L. Stewart-Wright, both from Cromwell.

It is apparent from the remits submitted that those present were far from satisfied with the operation of the Scheme. The view expressed by the Chairman, that if mining

41. J. L. Stewart-Wright, Secretary Cromwell Association to A. Brown, Secretary of Naseby Association, 28 July 1932.

42. Brown to Stewart-Wright, 1 August 1932.

43. D.T., 19 September 1932.

44. "Remits from Associations" and circular letter of resolutions passed at Conference, Stewart-Wright H.C. See Appendix.
in Otago was administered properly the province would emerge from the Depression faster than anywhere else in the Southern Hemisphere, was widely held.

Remits of a similar nature, passed by the Cromwell and Lakes Associations, questioned the "ability and economy of the present administration". In discussion it was stressed that it was not the men that were being criticised, but their lack of experience. They were described as having "no personal sympathy with mining". After considerable criticism had been voiced the delegates declared "that this Conference has no confidence in the supervision and control of the mining scheme in Otago". From Cromwell the remit read in part, "we contend that if properly organised and directed by a body of men possessed of recognised ability, experience and integrity the [scheme] will be effective in absolutely annihilating the unemployment problem in this province".

Lake County delegates were also concerned that the prospecting being done was largely fossicking in old workings.

The three remits from the Cardrona Gold Miners' Association highlighted the problems expressed previously. There was dissatisfaction at Cardrona as the land had already been worked by Europeans and Chinese. The Cardrona delegates requested a shift to a more lucrative locality and transport assistance to the new areas.

Speakers to the motion45 were concerned that the men had been promised returns of at least £3 per week per man by

the Certifying Officer; if they worked hard. ("If they had not worked hard they wanted to know what hard work was").

After 13 weeks work by two camps of men, only three ounces of gold had been won. The men could not afford to replace worn out clothing, and certainly could not meet relocation costs.

W. Johnston (St Bathans) who claimed to know the Cardrona well, said that while he was sure of the presence of gold in the area he doubted that it could be extracted with a pan, pick and shovel. Another speaker mentioned that they did not get a great deal of assistance from the supervisor (Jas 'Plunger' Jones), or the engineer. A miner from Matakanui compared the situation there to that at the Cardrona,

the engineer gives no instructions to the miner, "go where you like and starve if you like" was one policy.

He continued:

It is not that gold is not there, but brains are wanted behind the movement in the way of directing.

A resolution was adopted by the Conference asking the U.B. to pay for the removal of the men at Cardrona to new areas.

A remit from the Alexandra Association asked that mining associations be given a voice in the appointment of supervisors. This was supported and included as part of a resolution that dealt with the administration. It read in part,

We would respectfully suggest that from the personnel of the Executive Committees of the various Miners Associations a very capable controlling body could be selected.

46. Ibid.
Other matters discussed included the rent on land due to the County Council, the 10% deduction, Government assistance to free miners, water supply, the opening up of new areas in the Alexandra district, a Keystone drill, a call for the Government bonus of 10/- per ounce of gold (as done by the Australian Government), and unanimous support for the proposals (for weirs at Lakes Hawea and Wanaka) put forward by A. Ashworth. 47.

The Conference established an Executive Committee, consisting of three delegates from each affiliated association, with power to add other associations. The Executive Committee met immediately after the Conference was adjourned. Subsequent meetings were to have been called when warranted but, despite requests, the Executive Committee did not meet again.

The only official action taken by the Committee appears to have been a letter to the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Unemployment and Mines, the Members of Parliament for Otago and Southland, and the Commissioner of Unemployment, listing the resolutions passed at the Conference.

Official reactions to the resolutions were unsympathetic. The U.B. took a defensive stance when confronted with what they regarded as the "unhelpful" attitude of "a section of people in the Cromwell district". 48. Jessep regarded the tone of the resolutions as "intemperate" and was especially concerned at the comments on the ability and integrity of

47. See Introduction for explanation of Ashworth proposals.
48. Jessep, Deputy Chairman of the Unemployment Board, to Bodkin, MDUB 11/7/18.
the Scheme's administration.⁴⁹

In a reply to the Committee,⁵⁰ G. W. Lowe, Commissioner of Unemployment, called in question the motives of those who had formed the Mining Association. The offer by the Association to provide personnel for the Mining Executives was described by Lowe as "really generous". He implied that the Association was agitating so that it could gain control of the Scheme and use it to further the interests of its members. Before accepting their offer, Lowe suggested he be forwarded the names, occupation and qualifications of each of the Mining Association members.

As the majority of delegates at the Conference were not miners, subsidized or free, Lowe would have been able to argue that they did not represent the miners as they claimed. For example, the Cromwell delegation (the area where there were the most subsidized miners), included a printer (Varcoe), store-keeper, merchant, accountant (Stewart-Wright), fruit-grower, draper and dredge hand. Those delegations which included the most miners were Maniototo (half of the delegates), and Cardrona, which had only three delegates. As two of these three cannot be traced, and one was a wire worker in St Kilda, it is probable that they were all subsidized miners who had only recently gone to Cardrona. Of the 34 delegates at the Conference five were definitely miners and another five were possibly miners, as their occupation cannot be traced.

⁴⁹. Ibid,

⁵⁰. Copy of Memorandum, G. W. Lowe to Burrows, forwarded to A. M. Kimball, Queenstown. MDUB 11/7/18 in Appendix.
[Most of the later Conference delegates were not town businessmen. Eight of the 23 delegates were definitely miners, a further nine possibly miners.]

The Scheme had not been in progress for a year before the first Conference. As the new miners were still trying to establish themselves and gain knowledge of mining it is doubtful whether they had time to organise mining associations. The local business community was hopeful of an economic upturn as a result of the Scheme. They were also aware of mining needs and in a position to see the effects of the Scheme. When the Scheme fell short of expectations, because of apparent defects in administration, the local community voiced their opinion.

That the tragi-comic article was written by Stewart-Wright, as the Evening Star's correspondent in Cromwell, also worked against the Combined Association.

Lowe admitted that Cardrona was only a winter camp and training ground. The "best men" were drafted out and placed on land not accessible until spring. Many of the subsidized miners were fossicking in old workings. Lowe justified this by saying that "It was fossickers, and inferior ones in many cases, that had to be provided for". He went on to say that "scores" of families on "ventures that were purely speculative and held no return for months [several were] now reaching a stage where the Board's help will no longer be required, and as in all mining ventures, others after a year's hard toil have to begin again somewhere else". This example of the U.B.'s approach reinforces the view that the administration lacked sympathy with mining. Winter under canvas in Central Otago
was a cruel training ground. Concern and compassion by the U.B. is not indicated by setting men to work on ventures that were regarded as purely speculative.

In December 1932 a combined deputation from Clyde, Alexandra, and Ophir mining associations met Jessep. Issues discussed included many that had been raised at the Conference. Jessep agreed to investigate the Ashworth proposals, and the claims that dredging companies held the mining claims along the Molyneux River but were not mining there. He refused to reconsider the 10% deduction. It is startling to find, in the wake of harsh criticism at the Conference, that the deputation reported that they were working well with the local Executive Committee. Indeed one of the delegates commented that they were getting a "good deal from the Certifying Officer, the Supervisor and all concerned". It is difficult to explain this change in stance but the Alexandra-Clyde district may have been more fortunate in their miner-supervisor relations. They may have supported the Conference as they knew these conditions did not exist elsewhere. Possibly the deputation was intimidated by personal contact with Jessep.

The Executive Committee of the Otago Gold Miners' Association did not meet again. It is difficult to ascertain why the Association and its Executive sank into obscurity. A letter from L. L. Taylor-Cannon, Secretary of the Alexandra Association, to Keogh suggested that personal interests may

52. Ibid
have been threatened. In preparing for the 1934 attempt to unify the Associations Taylor-Cannon wrote of the 1932 Executive Committee:

but owing to the type of person appointed as Secretary no more was heard of it. As you may be aware the Secretary Mr Stewart-Wright of Cromwell is a Share-Broker and Company Promotor and as such is the last person to be appointed to such a position as his actions have shown that the interests of the individual miner or prospector [sic] and certainly the Subsidised miner do not run parallel with his interests and he and his kind are only out for quick flotation and get out before the bubble bursts.

Taylor-Cannon continued with harsh words against Bodkin. It appears that the Alexandra Association had proof of Bodkin's personal involvement in some of the large companies working in the area. His personal interests therefore diverged from those of the small prospector.

On one hand it is possible that the Combined Association may have directly threatened the interests of some of those persons in positions of responsibility. On the other hand, when the U.B. reacted defensively to the resolutions and showed an apparent willingness to take up the matter on a personal level, the Executive Committee may have felt it expedient to retire from confrontation. That the 1932 Conference was organised is an indication that it was recognised in the early stages by the local community that the Scheme was not well organised. An attempt was made to bring pressure to bear upon the U.B.; unified action being taken.

53. Taylor-Cannon to Keogh, 18 July 1934.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
The second Mining Conference was held in Alexandra on 28 July 1934. It was instigated by the Maniototo Association. Circular letters sent to neighbouring associations by the Maniototo Association were received favourably. The Secretary of the Clyde Mining Association (also called Dunstan), wrote favourably,

The Executive of the Dunstan Miners Association wish to make it known, they are in accord thoroughly with your suggestions as to the need for unity and cooperation amongst the various problems confronting the mining industry, by having unity together it would give us, as miners, more power to assert our rights and not become spawns for the Syndicates and mining speculators to use for exploitation.

The unified action was to protect the individual miner from the mining companies, as well as champion their rights to Government.

Those associations represented were Orepuki, Clyde, Alexandra, Maniototo and Roxburgh. (The resulting combined association included Lake as an affiliated member.) Cromwell is notable for its absence at the Conference or as an affiliated member of the new Association. The President and Secretary of the Alexandra Association, Ashworth and Taylor-Cannon, became Chairman and Secretary respectively. The delegates and supporters brought the number of those attending to sixty.

Two of the four Maniototo remits were concerned with the attempt to disenfranchise subsidized miners in the local body elections, and proposed changes to the Mining Act. These


57. T. E. Thompson, Secretary Clyde Association to Keogh, 13 June 1934.
were the issues that had prompted them to organise the Conference.

Agitation between mining and farming was widespread as their interests diverged. The U.B. had used the existing county councils when establishing their Mining Executives. It appears that in the Maniototo at least, and probably other areas as well, the County Council, and therefore the Mining Executive, was controlled by farming interests. Offers of assistance by the mining associations to the executives had been constantly refused. At the 1932 Conference W. Smith of the Maniototo Association criticized the extravagance of the County Council in the administration of the Mining Executive. He declared the system at Naseby to be "useless, fruitless and foolish". Therefore, in 1934, as miners would have heavily outnumbered farmers in the area, the County Council attempted to disenfranchise the former.

That other county councils had also agitated is evident from the remit,

That this conference cannot sufficiently express its astonishment and indignation at the action of certain county councils in urging the Government to pass legislation to prevent gold miners under the unemployment mining scheme from exercising their vote at the county elections.

Taylor-Cannon expressed the view that if the councillors were satisfied with their representation then they had nothing to fear from the miners. The remit was adopted.

The second major concern was that of the proposed changes to the Mining Act which threatened to restrict the

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58. D.T., 19 September 1932.
land available for mining. The Act required miners to prove the viability of a claim before a Miners' Right was granted. Miners argued that this would make mining impracticable and unprofitable. Farmers claimed that sluicing operations ruined the land for all time.

Other remits dealt with the portfolios of Mining and Agriculture being vested in one Minister as impractical, due to their diverging interests, the 10% deduction, the Ashworth proposals, water rights and dredging company claims.

A Central Executive was formed consisting of two delegates from each affiliated association with under fifty members, three for over fifty members. This Committee met at least once after its initial meeting. At that meeting the Mining Act's amendments were discussed thoroughly.

The Committee decided to send Taylor-Cannon to Wellington to make submissions to the Goldfields and Mines Committee, which was then sitting, to hear evidence for and against amendments to the Mining Act.

While in Wellington Taylor-Cannon also discussed the Ashworth Proposals with Arthur Tyndall, under Secretary of Mines (a native of Blue Spur, near Lawrence), the Acting Minister of Employment (J. A. Young), Secretary of the Unemployment Board, and the Commissioner of Transport (J. S. Hunter). Taylor-Cannon appears to have discussed a wide range of matters.

59. Newspaper clippings from Man Mins.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
It is difficult to gauge the success of Taylor-Cannon's visit to Wellington, or of the Association, as it was not mentioned further. At a Maniototo Association meeting, 14 September, it was asked whether the Combined Association still existed. A motion was passed that steps be taken to convene a combined meeting.

Therefore despite a promising beginning the Combined Association appears to have lapsed.

By the end of 1934 no changes had been instigated as a result of the unified action, but it remains to ask what the miners thought of the Scheme.
CHAPTER 3
"CITY BOYS"

On 23 July 1934 The Dunstan Times published an account of the gold prospecting scheme in which the writer appeared to look back to a golden pioneering past.

The U.B. was enthusiastically praised for "reviving gold digging as an important New Zealand industry" and for creating a new generation of gold-diggers.

The atmosphere of the gold fields was described as being one in which there still existed independence of spirit, "impressible optimism" that "good gold" would be struck any minute, strict honesty for another's property, and the will to overcome natural obstacles in the way of properly working their claims. These were the virtues of the previous century being revived.

The lifestyle of the mining community was described in idyllic terms. The men became masters of invention in creating "comfortable cabins" from split logs and shingles. The women rediscovered "the arts of cooking and baking in iron pots", imparting "to their primitive new homes an atmosphere of comfort with no materials other than that provided by nature".

The U.B. was applauded when the scheme's organisation was considered,

Only a small percentage of the subsidized miners have had previous experience of this class of work. The majority received their gold dishes with the inquiring interest of a novice [novice]. They have not however, been under the disability of having set out over the hills in the vain hope
of finding gold, which they would probably not recognise in its virgin state if they saw it. From the onset the Board [U.B.] has employed the best instructors to supervise and guide the novices that it could obtain. These are all practical miners and in most cases have been drawn from the ranks of the unemployed. There is now about one supervisor to every fifty miners, and in some areas competent mining engineers are also employed to carry out the surveying testing and development of new areas on which it is intended to place miners.

The article went on to cite the local mining executive members as being the driving force behind the success of the Scheme.

It is astonishing to find published in a major local newspaper this eulogistic account of the mining scheme and its' organisation. Subsequent writings and research do not support this view. There is no mention made of the harsh weather conditions endured, or disappointment wrought by the lack of readily available "good gold". In the words of an old miner:

In theory the scheme looked attractive enough and it appealed at first to many city people, but in practice it was a bitter experience.1

He went on to write of the harsh weather conditions endured, "the cruel frosts, the chill rains and driving snow", and concluded,

The small quantity of gold won by those men must have been the most expensive ever mined in New Zealand - expensive because of the useless toil, the grievous disappointments that so many men - and their dependent families - had to endure.2

What was it that attracted the men to gold bearing areas and how did they live?


2. Ibid.
The information in this chapter is mainly drawn from four oral interviews with men who had been on the Scheme. Three were attracted to Central Otago by the Scheme although only one had mined before. Despite their differing personal circumstances they were united in two opinions. The first being that the Scheme was instigated by the Government as a direct response to the 1932 riots to remove mainly young single men from urban areas, the second that the scheme was inefficient and ill-organised. It was emphasised that any illusions a man may have held for making a rich strike were quickly dashed.

The miners varied greatly in ages and former occupations. Although the Scheme imposed a lower age limit of twenty years, Mr Lind raised his age by two years so that he could receive the subsidy. This appears to have been common as no questions were asked. Mr Lind had mined previously with an experienced miner. Mr Walker, at 25 years had been a plumber, Mr Irwin in his early twenties a clerical cadet. Mr Morgan, a solo butcher, was in his mid 30's and the only married man with dependents among my interviewees.

Occupations of those men who went to Branch Creek with Mr Irwin included a boilermaker, fibrous plasterer, and french polisher. Professional men were also on the Scheme. Attracted to the Scheme by the independence offered and continuous subsidy (no stand down week), the "city boys".


4. "city boys" phrase from Irwin interview.
quickly became hardened to the harsh outdoor life.

News of the Scheme appears to have travelled largely by word of mouth. Mr Morgan and Mr Walker were both encouraged to take up mining by friends already in the area. Mr Walker had relatives in the Matakanui area. Mr Morgan knew only the family that had suggested the mining scheme when he arrived in Alexandra in 1934. As previously mentioned, Mr Lind had already been mining with an experienced miner for several years. The U.B. did not appear to actively direct men to areas. [He decided to join the Scheme after attending a meeting.] He was one of nineteen men who were taken to Branch Creek at Cardrona in 1932. On their arrival at Cromwell they were met by Mr Burrows, the Area Certifying Officer. The Salvation Army provided tea and breakfast for their one night stay at Cromwell, in the Salvation Army barracks, before they were taken on to Branch Creek.

Once in the gold mining area they moved freely to where it was rumoured that good gold was to be found. In his two years as a miner Mr Irwin was at Branch Creek, the Matutapu River, at the Clutha River near Cromwell when the gates of the Kawarau were shut, Alexandra, Doctors' Point, Butchers' Dam, and Dan Rich Gully near Alexandra. Mr Lind moved within the Alexandra-Clyde area. Mr Morgan moved from Alexandra to Galloway where he became established for a number of years. Mr Walker remained at Matakanui.

The administration played a concealed role in the lives of the miners. They had never heard of the mining executives. Contact with the mining associations was limited to practical advice. In some cases equipment could be borrowed.
example, Mr Morgan was loaned a pump by the Alexandra Miner's Association. The most visible administrative figures were G. Burrows, Certifying Officer at Cromwell, and the area supervisors. The miners appear to have regarded Burrows as the main administrator of the scheme.

That the supervisors were inefficient, inexperienced and neglected their duties is reinforced by interviews. Many of the supervisors knew as little as the new miners themselves despite the U.B. requirement that they be experienced miners. Most knowledge was gleaned from other miners rather than from the supervisors. When Mr Morgan moved to White Hill, Galloway, it was six months before the supervisor was seen in the area. That visit was due to an accident involving a miner close by. The supervisor said, "I suppose I can rely on you fellows to say that I have been up here every week!"

At Matakanui a local farmer, Joe Naylor, was supervisor. He made subsidy payments to the miners and "saw that everything was above board". The Supervisor at Cardrona, Jas (Plunger) Jones, had reputedly been at the Bendigo gold rush in Australia. He took the Branch Creek miners to an area that had not been previously mined and suggested the approach to be taken. Mr Irwin said that he understood little of the advice given, but quickly learnt. Although Jones gave minimal advice to the miners Mr Irwin did not appear to regard this as neglecting his duties. He felt that Jones's infrequent visits were due to his having several camps in the area to supervise. Tommy Roche, who became a supervisor in Alexandra, was originally from Lawrence. He was remembered for his demonstrations of cradling and sluicing in Dunedin. [Behind wharves possibly]
A proportion of the miners took advantage of the lax supervision by regularly collecting the subsidy but doing very little mining. There was no check made by the supervisors on the amount of gold produced by each miner.

The living conditions of the miners were very basic. The men began mining with only basic equipment. The U.B. provided pan, pick and shovel if the miner could not provide his own. The lack of readily available capital for miners to purchase equipment to develop their claims was to be a continual problem.

The lack of capital for machinery was emphasised by Mr Irwin. He worked in a number of areas around Central Otago, shifting mainly to see what was going on elsewhere. He and his partners gained several large lump sums in payment from gold sales. As this gold was usually the result of many hours of arduous work by several men the amount produced did not constitute good wages. He regarded the gold that they extracted as "uneconomic". For example, at the Matatapu River he and two others worked long hours wheeling barrows full of wash 200 yards to the river where it was sluiced. They gained 38 ounces of gold from this. Further up the river they attempted to dewater part of the river bed. Each time their dam was washed away. At Dan Rich Gully, near Blackman's Gully, Alexandra, as there was no water they had to cart the wash over a hill in sugar bags to sluice it in a stream on the other side. This was difficult and heavy work. Had they possessed capital they could have driven a

5. It was due to the relation between cheap labour costs and the high price of gold that the Scheme was attractive to the U.B. Uneconomic gold became economic.
Ken Morgan and Todd Symons, Rock Digging, Galloway

Galloway. Digging for gold, 8-9 feet down using winch built by miner. (Photos - K. Morgan)
tunnel through the hill.

Mr Morgan began at Alexandra with only basic equipment. After he moved to Galloway and went into partnership with Todd Symons they began to acquire more equipment to effectively utilize their claim. For twelve months they worked at Red Hill, where they had made a drive extending approximately 500 feet into the hillside. Into the drive they constructed a wooden railway line on which ran two trolleys that brought out the wash from the tunnel. To make corners in the track they used gig wheels cut in half. The wash was tipped into the gully and cradled in a stream below. (See photos)

Messrs Morgan and Symons also built an Elevator. In this method water was carried by iron and canvas pipes from a water race 60-80 feet above where they were working. The water jet, falling down the elevated pipe, created suction which took up gravel and water from the pit and shot it over the sluice box. (See photos). The photo on the previous page shows Mr Morgan working out of a hole over which a stand and pulley had been constructed. This went 8-9 feet down. The dirt was brought up and cradled or sluiced later. At times they had to dig in clay or rock. The gold won from this was consistent but the work was hard.

Mr Walker mined at Matakanui for a year. During that time he used only a pick, pan and shovel. He did not win very much gold.

A large majority of the miners did not go off the subsidy and become independent as anticipated by the U.B. Mr Walker remained on the subsidy. Mr Lind went on and off

6. Appendix VII for diagram of Elevating.
Mining in winter at Red Hill, Galloway.
Note - wooden railway to carry dirt from shaft.
(Photo - K. Morgan)
Red Hill, Galloway -
Ken Morgan and Todd Symons
Two views of elevated material being shot over the sluice box
Elevating, White Hill Galloway
Ken Morgan and Todd Symons.
Note - canvas and iron pipe carried water 60-70 feet down hill.
See Appendix for Diagram of Elevating.

(Photo - K. Morgan)
the subsidy several times as his success varied. Although Mr Morgan did well at Galloway he regulated the amount of gold sold so as not to be put off the subsidy. He sold only 12-18 pennyweights of gold per week (20 pennyweights per ounce).

The local banks had gold-buying licences. They would assay the gold and make deductions if there were any endorsements on the Miners' Right. The gold was then sold to Australia. If a premium was paid the miner received an extra payment.

Mr Lind and Mr Morgan were both aware of a person in Alexandra who was buying gold illegally. It was well known in the area that he would pay more than the official price for gold. He appeared to do well. Although Mr Lind did not say that he had sold "straight out", as it was known, Mr Morgan and Todd Symons sold him quite a lot, mainly to avoid deductions being made and being removed from the subsidy list. Before Christmas 1934 they each gained £60 from the illegal sale of 15oz of gold to this buyer.

Mr Irwin noted that if a miner sold a large amount of gold people became suspicious. The more experienced bank clerks could tell where the gold had been mined from its' colour and texture. It would therefore be in the miners' interests to regulate the amount of gold that was sold to avoid suspicion.

Winning gold was not always the answer to all problems. Fred Miller, in his autobiography, *There was Gold in the River*, wrote of the troubles that followed his gold strike. These included placating local bodies and farmers, securing
water rights, race building and repairing, securing legal title to his claim, meeting Mines Department requirements, court costs and rates. Other expenses caused him to reconsider whether goldmining was worthwhile.

At times I wondered if my gold was really worth anything, but I suppose it was, because our standard of living was raised. But nevertheless an ounce of gold I paid 10 per cent for the water - which was surplus in any case - 12/6 export tax, the shilling in the pound on income that everyone had to pay, rent for the ground, and rates for the county. The rent went up in easy stages from half a crown an acre for the first year, five shillings an acre for the second year, and seven and sixpence for the third year and thereafter, which was a great deal more than the grazier paid for his lease. So in proportion the Government and the local bodies all benefited from the fact that I had dug a hole and found gold in it. Oh, I forgot. My miner's right cost five shillings a year.7

Water rights caused some farmer/mining agitation. A reliable water supply was needed by the miner for sluicing operations but, as the P.W.D. acknowledged the precedence of irrigation over mining there was little the miners could do when their supplies were disrupted.

Mr Morgan paid £1 per head for water.8 One head of water was stored overnight in a dam they constructed ready for use the next day. The tailing water was used for irrigation by the farmer on whose land they were mining (Preston - Galloway Station).

During the summer there was no water available for sluicing as it was all needed for irrigation. Casual work

7. F. W. G. Miller; There was Gold in the River, A. H. and A. W. Reed, New Zealand, 1946, p.67.

8. This was after P.W.D. 10% water agreement expired in late 1934.
was available; fruit-picking, race-cleaning, some miners continued mining with a pick and shovel, others remained on the subsidy but did not mine.

Rabbit shooting was a lucrative sideline, during the winter when the skins were thick. The poachers were unpopular with farmers and rabbiters. [Government had a subsidized Rabbiting Scheme. (No. 11)]

Living conditions of the miners varied. Mr Lind and Mr Walker regarded themselves as fortunate as they lived in huts. Mr Morgan, his wife and two young daughters lived in three tents joined together. A 10 x 12 tent for the living area was flanked on opposite sides by two 8 x 10 tents which were used as bedrooms. In the middle tent there was a small pot belly stove, called a Hot Dog, which was used for heating and cooking. The stove was so efficient that at times they would have to open the tent flaps to let out the heat! Their water was carted from the river. 9

In contrast Mr Irwin described his first nights at Branch Creek in mid June. The U.B. had provided 8 x 10 tents from their store at Cromwell. The men were expected to provide blankets, and a mattress if possible. As few of the men could supply mattresses they used tussock to provide insulation from the frozen ground. On the first night they slept four to a tent as this was the only way they could keep warm. The bitter cold experienced that winter was repeatedly emphasised.

9. Morgan family camped beside the Manuherikea River for three months on land which is now part of the camping ground. Many miners lived along this bank.
GALLOWAY - SUMMER HOUSE

From left - Len Richardson (visitor), Ken Morgan and his two daughters. (Photo - K. Morgan)
As the "city boys" became more experienced they adapted their resources to meet the needs of survival. The tents were placed on wooden slats on top of three feet high stone walls. A sod chimney and fireplace were built at one end. Miller wrote of how he solved his housing problem by moving into a cave,

Nature had already provided the idea, had indicated the general layout, and the miners had done the rest. Additions to complete the house were provided by bricks of schist rock, which was easy to split into slabs, and the mortar was made from mud and chopped tussock, which provided an excellent binding material that stood for years.10.

He described his cave.

A great flat slab of rock jutting out of the hillside was all that was required for a roof, and some old-timer had built his wall round it of stone slabs and sundried brick. The floor was another solid slab of stone which stood two feet above the ground...

At one end he had even built a fireplace inside, and a chimney climbed from it up the outer wall. Here then was a home for the taking.11.

Mr Morgan lived in a cave during the summer while he was sluicing (see photo). Backing onto a rock face it had stone walls and a tent used as a roof. There was no door. Inside there was a small stove and wogga beds (made of two pieces of wood at each end, crossed over and strapped at crossing with sacking strung between on which they lay).

Food supplies were gleaned from various sources.

In Alexandra Saturday was gold selling day. The miners

from the surrounding area would go into Alexandra to sell their gold, collect the subsidy, and buy supplies for the week. The ladies of Alexandra provided a community morning tea for the men. First held in the Tennis Pavilion, the morning tea became so popular that it was later moved to the Community Centre.\textsuperscript{12}.

At first Mr Morgan went into Alexandra for supplies. When a number of miners became established at Galloway the supervisor travelled out to pay them, and their supplies were taken out.

At Matakanui supplies were ordered from Ted Duggan's store and delivered six days a week by rural delivery.

Meat was often brought from a local farmer. A side of hill wether cost Mr Walker four shillings.

Many farmers were generous with meat and vegetables. Mr Burdett, of Blue Spur, Lawrence, remembered as a boy of twelve years taking provisions given by his family, down to the men. These included eggs, milk, homemade butter, cabbages and fruit in season. From his observation their food was basic: bread, butter, tea, meat and rice. Substitutes were made such as golden syrup instead of butter. At 1s3p for a seven pound tin, golden syrup was much cheaper than butter.\textsuperscript{13}

The miners would supplement their diet with rabbits, quail, paradise ducks, fish, eels, and trout that they caught themselves.

The miners were careful not to take advantage of the

\textsuperscript{12} Interview S. Carline, 20 Chapple Street, Alexandra, 20 May 1983.

\textsuperscript{13} Walker interview.
farming families.

Social contact between the miners and the community depended largely on the extent to which the miners wished to become involved.

Local rugby clubs were quick to take advantage of the rugby talent displayed by some of the miners. The locals were aware that the miners could not afford to pay club fees and transport costs, and were therefore only too willing to confer honorary membership, provide transport, and shout for them after the game.

After the hastily organised Branch Creek rugby team soundly thrashed the Wanaka team, Mr Irwin and three other players were invited to join the Wanaka club. According to Mr Irwin several of the Branch Creek players had been in representative rugby sides. They were regularly taken from Branch Creek to the game and provided for at after match functions.

Mr Walker, who had played for Zingari-Richmond in Dunedin, joined the Matakanui rugby team. Mr Lind played one season for Alexandra, another for Clyde-Earnscleugh. In this way they travelled to all parts of Central Otago.

Other social events included community dances or the pictures at Alexandra [Hull's Talkies regularly advertised in D.T.] if they could afford it. At Matakanui Mr Walker remembered a "rip-roaring" social life centred around the Donnelly's Pub [proprietor Felix Donnelly] and regular

14. Mr Carline, President of the Alexandra Rugby Club, remembered miners playing for the Club. The Club had amassed funds before the Depression and could afford to subsidize the miners.
euchre evenings. At Alexandra there were regular dances. The miners at Lawrence were less fortunate. At this time Lawrence was a 'dry' area. The nearest hotel was twelve miles away at Evans' Flat. A regular dance was also held at Evans' Flat but transport and money would have probably prevented the miners from attending.15.

None of the men could remember needing medical assistance. The Vincent Hospital Board was concerned at the influx into the area of 600 miners, some with families. As they were legally a charge on the Vincent County after residing in the area for three months, the Board was concerned that they would be a drain on its finances.16.

The V.H.B. received requests from miners for dental treatment.17. The chemist at Cromwell, it was reported, had supplied medicines to miners but no payment had been received in most cases.18. One miner, already on the subsidy, in bad health, with three children, was granted a further 10/- in relief. Half of this was to be paid directly to his landlord for rent.19.

The Board was already having difficulty in extracting fees from patients. The hospital estimates were returned in 1933 by the Director-General of Health, with the suggestion that the Cromwell Hospital be closed which would save about

15. Burdett Interview.
17. Ibid, 6 July 1933 and 16 October 1935.
£1,000. The Board regarded the time as inopportune, especially as there were a large number of miners in the area. It was realised that the miners were in straightened financial circumstances. The Board approached the U.B. and the Director-General of Health with a proposal to establish a medical fund into which contributions would be made from deductions from the relief payments. They replied that this would have to be a domestic arrangement. The fund does not appear to have ever been instituted possibly as the Chairman of the Board had viewed the wage schedules of the men while in Wellington and realised that the deductions were already heavy. [The miners were unaware of the concern of the Board. No mention was ever made of a deduction from subsidy for medical expenses.]

A poem, The Goldminer's Lament, (following) probably written by a miner, shows the path from optimism to dashed illusions followed by many miners.

When asked if they felt that the scheme was worthwhile the interviewees felt that more capital and better organisation would have enhanced its' success. As a method of getting young men out of the urban areas, and as they would have had to pay them sustenance anyway, the Scheme was worthwhile.

While the lure of gold captured some of the "city boys" who remained in Central Otago, or had a continuing interest, for most of the men it was merely another experience in their lives.

20. Ibid, 17 May 1933.
21. Ibid, 2 September 1933.
THE GOLDMINERS' LAMENT

As a homey I came to the land of
the fern,
Adventures to seek and a living to
earn.
In the throes of depression no job
could be found
Although I tried hard in each city
and town.
At last I awoke as out of a dream
And applied for a job on the
Gold-mining scheme
And being successful I no more
longed to be
Where the Mountains of Mourne
sweep down to the Sea.

With my swag on my back feeling
happy and bold
From Ashburton I started in search
of the gold,
And after a longsome and wearisome
tramp
In two days I landed at Omakau
Camp.
And what I saw there you will very
soon know
There were dozens of Tents in a
sorrowful row,
And when I looked round, sure, I
wished I could be
Where the Mountains of Mourne
sweep down to the Sea.

The boys in amusement create no
hub-bub
At Euchre, or Sing sogns [sic] at
Donnelly's pub,
Except on a Friday when all in a
line
They toddle to Joe's for their
fourteen and nine.
They gambol and scramble o'er
mountain and dell
And you'd swear all the devils had
broke out of hell.¹
But after paying their bills, sure,
they might as well be
Where the Mountains of Mourne
sweep down to the Sea.

¹. In D.I. reads "heaven" instead of hell. Probably
changed for publication.
Month after month slowly dwindled away
The lure for the gold in me seemed to decay
Good times are coming, depression has gone
I decided to pack up my swag and anon
Feeling sorry to leave all these memories behind
I thought it was better before I was blind
For all that I found there, sure, I might as well be,
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.

Anonymous

(The Dunstan Times
30 January 1933)
EPILOGUE

"The Cinderella of Industries"

The Gold Prospecting Subsidy Scheme was not, as it may first appear, a departure from the norm. Grubstaking, that is assisting a miner over lean times until he has developed his claim, had always been a part of gold-mining in New Zealand. In the 1930's the Government chose to incorporate this feature into their unemployment scheme.

The Scheme continued until 1941. After 1935 job opportunities in urban areas attracted many of the unsuccessful miners. Subsidy increases made it expedient for the U.B. to encourage successful miners to establish efficient, permanent, gold-mining activities.

The amount of gold won did not fall with the decrease in miners as those who left were unproductive. A report from the Vincent County Mining Executive, 30 June 1935, showed that the average return of gold per man had stayed much the same as the previous year although there were 150 less miners. The average gold return for the six months ending 30 June 1935 had been 2oz 18wts 12grs per man, as compared with 2oz 19wts 14grs in the six months ending 31 December 1934. Despite a large number of men working for the P.W.D. in Alexandra and a dozen on Special Prospecting the gold yield was much the

2. MDUB 11/7/3, Pt 1. See Appendix I.
same. As only 52.4% of miners had sold gold these men had produced twice as much as the average per man. The amount of gold being produced was stable, but nearly half of the miners had not sold any gold through legal channels.

In June 1936 the Labour Department took over the Scheme, in 1939 the Mines Department assumed responsibility for it. With the entry of Japan into World War II in 1941, all subsidized work was discontinued in favour of the war effort and the Scheme was ended.3

The golden era confidently predicted by the people of Central Otago did not occur, but the community appears to have been stimulated by the large numbers of new faces in the area.

As no major discoveries were made by subsidized miners4 when cheap, mobile labour was readily available for widespread prospecting, it has been suggested that by the 1930's New Zealand's alluvial gold resources were virtually exhausted.5

As the easy gold had already been taken by both European and Chinese miners it is doubtful that subsidized miners using the same methods of pan and cradle would be very successful. It could be suggested that the remaining alluvial gold deposits are inaccessible, awaiting the development of new technology to extract it, as opposed to exhausted.

Had it been recognised in 1931 (as stated in 1934 by

4. Most publicized find was probably that of Bell and Kilgour, two Cromwell men who struck "good gold" in the Kawarau Gorge, 1932.
Minister of Mines) that "much money could be wasted in subsidising mining prospecting;\(^6\) and steps been taken so that the Scheme had been given capital, technical advice and experienced management, much hardship may have been averted.

Gold-mining, called "The Cinderella of Industries" by P. C. Webb,\(^7\) remains important in the folklore of Central Otago. In the future, to quote A. J. Woods, "factors of cost and economic expediency must not be allowed to over­ride the consideration of human needs",\(^8\) should grubstaking be undertaken again as an unemployment scheme.

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6. A.H., 10 October 1934.
APPENDIX I

Vincent County Mining Executive Report

Principle areas in which men worked in Central Otago, and the average number of men in each area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>30 June 1933</th>
<th>30 December 1934</th>
<th>30 June 1935</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bannockburn</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardrona</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Camp Creek</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>121</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
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<td>Fruitlands</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luggate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matatapu</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omakau</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poolburn</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarras</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MDUB 11/7/3 Pt 1

Number of men on scheme in each area 1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Island</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlborough Province</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Province</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast and Buller</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Otago</td>
<td>1,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Otago</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southland</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(AJHR 1933 H-35 p.9)

Showing the average number of men on the scheme at the end of each six monthly period, total gold won for period and the average per man

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period ending</th>
<th>Av.No. Men</th>
<th>Total Gold</th>
<th>Av.per Man</th>
<th>Value (£6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30th June 1933</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>369oz</td>
<td>12wts 2grs.</td>
<td>£3.12. 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st Dec. 1933</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>708oz</td>
<td>1oz. lwts 20grs.</td>
<td>£6.11. 0.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th June 1934</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>640oz</td>
<td>2oz.15wts 6grs.</td>
<td>£16.11. 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th June 1935</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>468oz</td>
<td>2oz.18wts 12grs.</td>
<td>£17.11. 0.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MDUB 11/7/3 Pt 1
APPENDIX II

DELEGATES TO MINING CONFERENCE, CROMWELL, 8 SEPTEMBER 1932
(and occupations)

LAKE COUNTY:

J. McMullan - [possibly farmer]
W. H. Overton - motor proprietor and proprietor of Laurel Bank
C. M. Inglis - town clerk, commercial and insurance agent
G. Hope - miner
J. Anderson - labourer
J. Shaw - labourer
A. G. Smith - [A. E. Smith a mine-owner at Skippers]
H. Ross - Junction Hotel and postmaster
J. W. Miller - untraced

MANIOTOTO COUNTY:

W. Smith - insurance agent
G. Brown - miner
W. Johnson - miner
W. Becker - blacksmith
E. Scherp - blacksmith
S. O'Hara - miner [St Bathans]
W. George - miner
J. McKnight - [only builder at Ophir]

ALEXANDRA:

A. Ashworth - store manager (J.P.)
G. Watts - labourer
O. W. Mangus - labourer [Galloway]
L. Ryan - farmer (J.P.)
G. Hesson - labourer
H. Wright - [possibly tailor - Clyde]
J. Magnus - not traced

CARDRONA:

H. Tregea - not traced
E. G. Marston - (wire worker - St Kilda, Dunedin)
R. Gibson - not traced

CROMWELL:

R. G. Varcoe - printer
E. Jolly - of David A. Jolly and Sons Ltd, storekeeper (J.P.)
W. Jelley - draper
G. Stumbles - of Geo. Stumbles and Sons Ltd, merchant
M. de Bettencor - fruit grower, Lowburn
J. L. Stewart Wright - accountant (J.P.)
F. Jones - (possibly dredgehand, Nevis)

(Ref: Stone's Street Directory 1932)
APPENDIX III

Remits from Associations for Mining Conference
8 September 1932 (H.C.)

LAKE COUNTY MINERS' ASSOCIATION, QUEENSTOWN.

1. That the question of purchase of Gold by the Government be investigated.
2. That the Government be asked to consider the granting of a bonus of say 10/- per oz. on all gold won, as has been done by the Australian Government.
3. That the matter of a reduction of rents on claims be considered.
4. To object to the manner in which Mining by Unemployed is carried on in this District, viz:-
   (a) The control is put in the hands of men who have no mining experience.
   (b) The prospecting which is being done is only fossicking in old workings.
   (c) The system of pay is unfair to Unemployed men who do not want to go prospecting.
   (d) That this Association has no confidence in the supervision and control of the mining scheme in this District.
5. That it be recommended that an Executive Council be set up consisting of representatives from all Mining Associations in Central Otago.

CARDRONA GOLD MINERS' ASSOCIATION, CARDRONA.

1. The desirability of obtaining a shift to a more lucrative locality.
2. The general dissatisfaction existing in the camps, owing to the fact that the Cardrona Valley has been thoroughly worked out, first by Europeans and then by Chinamen. This is borne out by the fact that the total amount of gold procured by the members of the two camps, does not exceed three ounces for thirteen weeks work.
3. The manner of our transport in the event of our obtaining a shift.

CROMWELL DISTRICT MINING ASSOCIATION

1. That the imposition of 10% of all gold won by the Unemployed Miners is unfair and an injustice to the men, and this Conference would respectfully point out that the men are invariably faced with expenses in the way of timbering, shooting, pumping, trucking etc.
2. That it be a recommendation to the Government to place a Keystone Boring Plant, under expert supervision, at the disposal of the Unemployed Miners, with a view to enabling the men to more expeditiously determine the depth, exact locality and value of ground.
3. Believing that the discovery of a new mineral field, especially gold at the present time would give a greatly needed fillip, and be of inestimable value to the Dominion this Association deplores the methods being adopted in this district for the employment of Unemployed Miners. The Association is of the opinion that the organisation at Cardrona was ill-advised and that the same men, at a much lesser cost have been put to work in much more likely areas where each and all would have had opportunities to augment their unemployed pay, and would have materially assisted the achievement of the greatly to be desired increased gold production.

4. This Association is of opinion that if properly organised and directed by a body of men possessed of recognised ability, experience and integrity the Unemployed Gold Prospecting Scheme will be effective in absolutely annihilating the Unemployment problem. The present methods employed at for instance Cardrona where men are told to 'tunnel in there and the job is to shift that bit of New Zealand, irrespective of whether gold is likely to be found or not, is nothing more than farcical if not iniquitous and certainly calculated to destroy any initiative the men possess.

ALEXANDRA MINERS' ASSOCIATION

1. That various localities in our district, where water could be supplied at a small cost could be opened up in the neighbourhood of Tucker Hill to the Raggedy.

2. That the Minister of Mines be asked to take over Sander's Dam at Little Valley for the benefit of Mining generally coupled with irrigation.

3. That the various Miners' Associations be given a voice in appointing supervisors or in making other appointments.
APPENDIX IV

Resolutions passed 1932 Mining Conference (H.C.)

"That the Government be asked to place sufficient funds to the credit of the Mines Department to enable miners other than unemployed miners to prospect for reefs and new alluvial fields as the prospecting of such areas necessitates a great deal of expense to individuals."

"That the Government be asked to consider the granting of a bonus of say 10/- per ounce on all gold won as has been done by the Australian Government."

"That the Government be asked to seriously consider and investigate the wisdom of undertaking the purchase of gold."

"That the Government be asked to consider the matter of a reduction of rents on claims, it being considered that in view of present day conditions a flat rate of 2/6 per acre would be more equitable than the present scale of rents."

"That it be a recommendation to the Government to place a Keystone Boring Place, under expert supervision, at the disposal of the Unemployed Miners, with a view to enabling the men to more expeditiously determine the depth, exact locality and value of ground."

"That it be a recommendation to the Government to have a small portable crushing plant placed at the disposal of prospectors in Central Otago."

"Believing that the discovery of a new mineral field, especially Gold at the present time would have a greatly needed fillip, and be of inestimable value to the Dominion, this Conference of the Naseby, Alexandra, Cardrona, Lake County and Cromwell Miners' Associations urges on the Government the desirability of concentrating on the development of the Gold Mining Industry. We would respectfully suggest that the matter is so vital as to be worthy of the employment of the best brains, experience and business acumen the Country possesses. The Conference deplors the methods being adopted in Central Otago for the employment of Unemployed Miners and questions both the ability and economy of the present administration. We contend that if properly organised and directed by a body of men possessed of recognised ability, experience and integrity the Unemployed Gold Prospecting Scheme will be effective in absolutely annihilating the Unemployment problem in this province.

We would respectfully suggest that from the personnel of the Executive Committees of the various Miners' Associations a very capable controlling body could be selected."
"That the imposition of 10% of all gold won by the Unemployed Miners is unfair and an injustice to the men and this Conference would respectfully point out that the men are invariably faced with expenses in the way of timbering, shooting, pumping, trucking etc."

"That various localities in Alexandra District where water could be supplied at a small cost be opened up between Tucker Hill and Ophir, and also in the vicinity of the Raggedys."

"That the Minister of Mines be asked to take over Sanders' Dam at Little Valley, for the benefit of Mining generally coupled with irrigation."

"That this Conference gives its cordial support to the petition to the House, being circulated by Mr A. Ashworth and others praying that the Government will undertake the erection of weirs at the outlets of Lake Wanaka and Hawea."

"Owing to the failure of what by one leading Dunedin Daily has been termed 'the tragi-comedy of the Cardrona Prospecting venture' we urge that the men now employed there be shifted without further delay to an area calculated by practical mining men, and further that the Unemployment Board be asked to bear the cost of shifting the men from Cardrona."

"That the prospecting which is being done is largely only fossicking in old workings."

"That this Conference has no confidence in the supervision and control of the Mining scheme in Otago."
APPENDIX V

Reply to Resolutions (MDUB 11/7/18)

ROYAL OAK HOTEL
ARROWTOWN
OTAGO,
15th October, 1932.

Memorandum for:
Mr A. H. Kimbell.

Dear Sir,

In compliance with the request of your memo. of the 29th September, I forward my opinion on the various items submitted. Excluding the first four resolutions of the Otago Gold Mining Association I will deal with the rest in rotation.

5. While fully recognising that the Keystone Drill is a useful machine for prospecting when under careful and competent supervision, I fail to see whereby unemployment can be diminished or unemployed men be assisted by the drilling of any area in Otago, as in the event of it being used and ground profitable enough discovered to be exploited by dredging, hydraulic or shaft sinking, the only benefit that would accrue to unemployed men would be the wages they would be paid by the Individual or Company who furnished the necessary capital to make the claims productive.

6. The amount of prospecting for quartz reefs in Central Otago is negligible, up to date not more than six unemployed are so employed, and the amount of work done in this direction by private enterprise is very small. In all the area I have examined the only parcel of ore at grass was one of about ten tons produced by a syndicate which numbers among its members Directors of a Company who possess a well equipped battery which has lain idle for the greater part of this year. Such a plant may be provided in Lake County to advantage, greater attention is being paid to quartz prospecting in this country but up to date work has not proceeded far enough to justify the erection or provision of any sort of plant.

7. It is obvious that the discovery of a new goldfield in the near future would be of material benefit to the Dominion, and it is generally recognised that brains and ability are useful factors in any walk of life, and the offer to find new Goldfields and supply brains etc for their administration by the Mining Associations is really generous. But before accepting their offer I would suggest that the names of the members of each Association be forwarded with their occupation and qualifications attached.
8. In cases where tools, tents and other equipment has been provided by the Board to enable men without means to go out and look for gold the 10% reduction was just and equitable, but there are many cases where men have fully equipped themselves and asked for nothing but the subsidy of 15/- or 30/- as the case may be and in their cases I consider that by foregoing the 10% of proceeds of gold won the Board would encourage the right type of man to pitch his camp where he can do some useful work and give the minimum of trouble.

9. The localities in Alexandra District were examined and reported upon favourably, but as no water was available for the areas between Galway [sic] and Tucker Hill and if there was water, there was not sufficient payable ground remaining to justify the heavy expenditure in bringing it in. Regarding Raggedy Range and Ophir, a report favouring this area for unemployment purposes was submitted, and a report on the question of race cutting and water supply for this area was forwarded recently.

10. While the Minister of Mines possibly could take over Sanders Dam, the irrigation rights absorb most of the water, and the surplus is now being used by miners at Shanty Creek and Doctors Point. This matter was looked into closely by Mr Macpherson and the report dated June 9th by the Public Works Engineer on the subject clearly shows that a large expenditure is required on a new dam for the storage of a comparatively small amount of water.

11. The erection of weirs at the outlets of Lakes Wanaka and Hawea will be dealt with in a separate report as requested.

12. The Tragi-Comic article referred to in the remit was from facts supplied written by the Secretary of the Cromwell Association, who is the local correspondent of the Evening Star Dunedin. Among many omissions in his complaints about Cardrona, an important one, was that exactly the same conditions prevailed in and around Cromwell as far as the productivity of the fields were concerned; Cardrona being 50 miles from Cromwell was of no economic benefit to the latter, and in the presence of Mr Macpherson who examined the field prior to my examination, a prominent member of the Association and a practical mining man expressed the opinion that Cardrona was too good for unemployed men and it should be pegged out for a Company. This man's services were offered to a Mining Executive but declined. As to free transport of the men from Cardrona Nos. 1 and 2 camps, this was attended to at the proper time by the controlling body, the best men were drafted out and placed on ground that was not accessible until the Spring. Cardrona from its inception was only a winter camp and training ground and proved successful in spite of the material sent forward.
13. Undoubtedly a lot of the work being done was fossicking in old workings, it was fossickers, and inferior ones in many cases, that had to be provided for. They, however, omitted to state that scores of men, many with wives and families, with the Board's assistance undertook ventures that were purely speculative and held no hope of any return for months. Several of such parties are now reaching a stage when the Board's help will be no longer required, and as it is in all mining ventures, others after a year's hard toil have to begin again somewhere else.

14. The concluding paragraph of the remits explain the previous seventeen, the administration of the Unemployment Board's funds in encouraging mining and relieving unemployment would [sic] not be dealt with in any other manner than through the County Council whose members and officials are giving a tremendous lot of time and thought to the work. They realize that the relieving of unemployment and the consequent distress entailed is a serious obligation, and from personal knowledge I can say that a just and deserving application is treated with promptitude and sympathy, while border line cases are carefully examined and dealt with on their merits, but there is no doorway left by which abusers of the subsidy can gain entrance, hence arises the condemnation of the Mining Executive.

As to the supervisor of the workers under the mining scheme, I have met every man employed in that capacity, they have been carefully chosen, their integrity is above question, and their ability is such that the Board is fortunate in securing their services, and when this depression has passed many a man will be grateful for the knowledge of mining he has acquired under their guidance, for one of the least noticed benefits of the scheme is that miners and prospectors are being trained today to take the places of the generation that is gone.

Yours faithfully,

(sgd.) G. W. Lowes.

The Commissioner of Unemployment, WELLYINGON.

For your information.

[Signed G. Burrows]

22.10.1932.
APPENDIX VI

DELEGATES TO MINING CONFERENCE, ALEXANDRA, 28 JULY 1934
(and occupations)

OREPUKI:
J. Sorenson - miner
Cross - miner (J.P.)
A. Paull - (A. Pahl) - miner
W. Braid - not traced
J. Braid - not traced

MANIOTOTO COUNTY:
A. Brown - miner
J. Keogh - printer
L. Jopson - miner
W. George - miner
W. Batchelor - labourer (also miner)
P. Duneen - not traced

ROXBURGH:
Arlewitch - not traced
H. Henderson - tailor

CLYDE:
G. Thompson - not traced
T. Hammond - labourer
W. Jefferson - not traced
R. Blair - miner
I. Iverson - not traced
P. Heenan - (possibly farmer)
A. Arnot - not traced

ALEXANDRA:
A. Ashworth - store manager (J.P.)
L. Taylor-Cannon - not traced
S. Cameron - dredgemaster

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