

Reserve of many thousands, as well as two large bodies of Allied troops located and training for the time being in this country. Vast quantities of every kind of military equipment had reached the Dominion or been manufactured here, and a voluminous flow of munitions and warlike stores both from internal and external sources was adding rapidly to these resources. The Air and Naval Forces in New Zealand had been transformed and expanded to meet the new situation, and between them accounted at that time for a further 25,000 persons.

Powerful as was this great accumulation of strength for defensive purposes within the Dominion, it was also formidable as a flexible force, ready at short notice, and without any need for fresh calling up, to be despatched quickly to some other point in the Pacific so as to block up the very approaches to the Dominion, or aid a neighbour in emergency.

On the industrial side, a great programme of defence construction had been carried through, and hundreds of major works, such as aerodromes, hospitals, stores, and shelters had been brought into existence. In spite of man-power losses, the secondary industries of the Dominion were producing record quantities of materials and equipment and performing much jobbing work for the Allied forces, which were moving steadily into the Pacific zone. Civilian man-power and woman-power had been mobilized, and the circulation of labour within the field of industry had been brought under control.

In the realms of civil defence the population had by now become accustomed to the routine of compulsory fire-watching and the sight of air-raid shelters on every hand, while even black-out trials and mock air raids were beginning to lose their novelty.

In all, 164,000 persons had been withdrawn from industry and transferred to the armed forces at home and overseas, while more than 250,000 others were serving part time in the civil defence, Home Guard, and other auxiliary services.

20. THE OUTLOOK OF NEW ZEALAND'S MAN-POWER RESOURCES IN SEPTEMBER, 1942

Formidable as were the Dominion's defences by the spring of 1942, they had not yet reached the dimensions which had been planned by the Army Department. To build the home defence forces up to full war establishment would require yet more thousands of men, while trained reinforcements in addition were also being planned for.

At the same time the New Zealand Division in the Middle East was beginning to reach a stage when more reinforcements would be necessary, and there was need also to provide men to garrison Pacific islands.

To add to these demands, the Air Force in New Zealand was still building up its strength and looked forward to further developments in 1943 which would involve heavy increases in personnel, apart from the regular flow of recruits for the Empire Air Training Scheme, while the Royal Navy and New Zealand Navy were in need of smaller but regular supplies of man-power.

New Zealand had always been in the forefront of the British nations in mobilizing her personnel, and had already given up to the forces a quarter of her whole male population aged fourteen to sixty-four, or 10 per cent. of her entire population. Even if industrial production were to remain at the same level, the provision of man-power indefinitely on the scale involved in meeting all these demands simultaneously would in itself require drastic measures of reorganization on the home front and curtailment of many industrial activities and civilian amenities. But industrial production was not required to remain at the same level. As the size of the forces mobilized in the Dominion continued to increase, the amount of work required to be done by the civilian working population in feeding, clothing, and equipping them also increased. The industries of the Dominion faced the prospect of a huge and ever-increasing volume of work requiring to be handled by a depleted and still-diminishing labour force.

It was at this stage that a new cloud appeared on the industrial horizon. A great chain of island bases was being thrown across the Pacific by our American allies, and troops were pouring in a great stream down into the southern oceans, where supplies of food, timber, and a hundred other things needed by troops could most readily be supplied from New Zealand. It was not long before our capacity to produce for our Allies was being examined. The spotlight was on our industrial man-power position as never before. Men had to be taken out of the forces and placed back on their farms to increase food-production, and now men were urgently wanted for timber-production, flax-cutting, vegetable-growing, and ship-repairing, to mention only some of the newly-accentuated demands.

But spring had come, and brought with it all the seasonal demands for workers by the thousand to man the Dominion's vital food-processing industries, which year by year rise to their crescendo as each new spring gives way to summer.

And so in the spring of 1942 the Dominion was facing simultaneous urgent demands for man-power from every branch of the armed forces and from all the major producing and processing industries. An all-round man-power shortage, far transcending anything which could have been foreseen a year earlier, was in immediate prospect, and strong and clear-cut action, affecting both industrial control and man-power control simultaneously, was seen to be vitally necessary if the many forms of re-adjustment which the situation demanded were to be successfully carried into effect.

A War Planning and Man-power Committee was therefore formed to advise War Cabinet as to the steps which would be necessary, the personnel of this Committee comprising the Director of Production, the Commissioner for Defence Construction, the Director of the Agriculture Department, the Director of National Service, the Controller of Man-power, a member of the Stabilization Commission, and five departmental officers co-opted specially for this work. On 17th September the Committee placed a detailed review of the man-power position in industry before War Cabinet, and recommended a series of measures designed to bring about a standard of rigour and austerity in the war effort going beyond anything which had until then been found necessary.