

With the further expansion of the coverage of declarations of essentiality, so as finally to leave little outside their scope which could be regarded as of fundamental importance other than the farming group and a few classes of casual work, it was decided in November, 1942, to extend the coverage of the Employment Restriction Order so as to make it apply to all work arising in the above-mentioned centres which had not been declared essential, other than farming, market gardening, wharf work, nursing, and casual work lasting not more than three days.

Up to 31st March, 1943, there had been approximately 12,000 applications lodged with Man-power Officers to engage workers in undertakings covered by these provisions, and while the majority of these were granted, there were 867 cases where permission was refused, and 359 of the workers who would have gone to non-essential work were diverted instead into essential work.

Appeals against these decisions have numbered 2 only.

9. THE PROBLEM OF ABSENTEEISM

It would be fruitless to impose obligations on employers in order to prevent the termination of employment in essential industries and to keep the plant operating at full capacity if workers were at the same time free to absent themselves at will.

In order to bring this aspect home to the workers concerned, and to provide a means of reducing absenteeism, the Industrial Absenteeism Emergency Regulations were brought into effect on 20th May, 1942. These regulations impose the obligation on employers of notifying cases of absence without leave for four hours or more, or cases of persistent shorter absences.

The first step taken by Man-power Officers in dealing with cases of alleged absenteeism is to investigate the complaint so as to ensure that genuine absenteeism without reasonable cause is in fact involved. Where this is found to be the case a warning is usually given where there has been no previous complaint, and if this warning is not effective a fine may be imposed.

Up to the end of March, 1943, there had been 7,564 complaints of absenteeism lodged with Man-power Officers. In 1,427 cases these charges were found not to be well founded, 5,109 warnings were issued, and 424 fines had been imposed. (The remaining cases were still under action.)

Women workers accounted for 2,736 of the complaints.

10. MOVEMENTS AS BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES AND INDUSTRY

With the up-swing of the seasonal industries during the spring of 1942 special provision had to be made for the manning of seasonal industries. Much of the seasonal labour force was by then in camp, and the man-power position in every field of industry was extremely difficult. As there was no alternative, men had to be released from camp to man butter and cheese factories and freezing-works throughout the Dominion.

In collaboration with the Army Department, arrangements were made in several cases for Man-power Officers to visit camps and select men on the spot for work of this nature. Recommendations for release were in such cases made subsequently by Armed Forces Appeal Boards after a fuller investigation of the individual circumstances. In other cases, such as for harvesting work, releases have been for very short periods only, and Appeal Board action has been unnecessary. Team work as between the Army authorities, Appeal Boards, and Man-power Officers has resulted in many difficult situations being avoided.

With the recent survey and large-scale redistribution of man-power as between the Army, the Air Force, and industry, it has recently been decided that in future all applications for the release of men from camp shall pass through the hands of Man-power Officers, and several thousands of releases of Grade II men possessing skill or experience of particular industrial value have in fact been initiated by this Department and effected through Man-power Officers. Of the many thousands of applications from individual employers or men themselves, the only cases now being referred to Appeal Boards are those relating to men who are (or will soon become) eligible for overseas service—i.e., Grade I men aged twenty to forty inclusive. The remaining cases are dealt with entirely by Man-power Officers on the one hand and Army officers on the other hand.

A new chapter in the activities of Man-power Officers has now been opened up with the supply to each Man-power Officer of details of all Grade I men aged twenty to forty inclusive and Air Force and Naval volunteers held back in his district from service with the forces, so that by means of the release of Grade II men from camp or otherwise the maximum possible number of these men can be made available to the forces through the provision of industrial replacements.

By these means a planned attempt is being made to attain the twin objectives of securing the maximum benefit to industry from the release of men from the forces, while at the same time facilitating the supply to the forces of the maximum number of fighting men.

11. REVIEW OF INDUSTRIAL MOBILIZATION

Looking back over the past eighteen months of development in the organization of industrial man-power control, and comparing the position of man-power in industry to-day with what it would have been in the absence of this system of control, it is not difficult to realize that neither the present magnitude of the forces supported by this Dominion nor the large and expanding volume of output from her war industries could have been attained without the assistance of some such measures as those which have actually been adopted.

To have discriminated among individual men called up for military service, so as to take only those who could be spared without injury to fundamentally necessary industrial activities, was a vast improvement on any indiscriminate system of recruiting for the armed forces. But this step alone