

While a comparatively high degree of protection against loss of man-power was accorded to the farming industries, yet there were four factors which led to the entry of a fairly large number of farm workers into the Armed Forces :

- (i) In the earliest stages there was a small margin of unemployment to be absorbed, a number of farm workers being included among these men :
- (ii) *All* industries were, at the outset, expected to make some contribution of man-power to the Forces :
- (iii) There were doubts in 1940-41 as to the possibility of shipping away the whole of the Dominion's exportable surplus of foodstuffs, so that the case for retaining the *whole* of the existing farm-labour force was not at that time seriously put forward :
- (iv) There was, on the other hand, among farming communities no less than elsewhere, some agitation against the holding-back of fit single men from service with the Forces.

The Dominion's Armed Forces consisted at that time of —

One Division in the Middle East :

A Territorial Force subject to part-time training only :

Air and naval training establishments :

A voluntary Home Guard and other auxiliary organizations.

The outlook appeared to be fairly stable, and the tasks ahead, on the man-power front, appeared to lie mainly in the orderly and progressive redistribution of man-power, and the fuller mobilization of woman-power and other unused labour reserves, so that essential production could be fully maintained or increased in spite of the continued steady withdrawal of men to the Forces.

(b) *The Second Phase.*—The sudden entry of Japan into the war broke up the whole of this background.

The rapid southward progress of a formidable enemy threw a sudden emphasis on the organization of the Dominion for defence against air raid and invasion. Compulsory universal service was introduced into the Emergency Reserve Corps and the Home Guard ; women and men of lower medical grades entered the ranks of the Army ; the Territorial Force was mobilized on a full-time basis ; a rapid succession of ballots was held with the object of building up the home-defence Forces to a level corresponding with the nature of the emergency.

Though all further supplies of man-power to the overseas Forces were completely suspended for more than a year, this full-scale mobilization for defence inevitably resulted in a very substantial withdrawal of man-power from industry. While married men were being drafted into camp in large numbers, single men previously held back from the Service were also being released to the Forces. The importance of the national safety rose paramount above all other considerations, though even during this period of crisis it was found necessary to retain a substantial number of fit men such as coal-miners, locomotive-drivers, defence-construction workers, &c., as well as indispensable farm workers, in their normal employment in order to maintain the industrial life of the community.

It was at this time that the system of industrial man-power control was brought into operation, with important results in stabilizing the labour position and ensuring a supply of workers to the highest-priority work.

In order to safeguard the farming industries, an important step was also taken during mid-1942 to release substantial numbers of farm workers from camp, and approximately 8,000 men returned to the land.

Even after allowing for these releases, however, the numbers withdrawn from industry rose between November, 1941, and September, 1942, from 86,000 to 170,000 —i.e., to a figure of 10 per cent. of the population, or 29 per cent. of the males aged fifteen to sixty-four. At the same time more than 100,000 men were serving with the Home Guard, and an even greater number with the E.P.S.

(c) *The Third Phase.*—The transition from the period of emergency to the period of consolidation and readjustment came more gradually. Though the Japanese had been stemmed at Guadalcanal, there was still some risk of naval disaster, and precautions continued to be necessary for some time after the southward drive of the invader had been checked.

During this period of strategic readjustment, a number of fundamental changes began to affect the *industrial* position of the Dominion.

Allied Forces, now massing in the Pacific, required food, timber, ship-repair services, and other supplies and services most readily obtainable from New Zealand, and men began to be taken out of the home-defence Forces to assist in meeting these requirements. The seasonal upswing of the 1942-43 season in the Dominion's butter and cheese factories and freezing-works had to be met by further drawing on the Army.

As the pressure of industrial factors increased, the needs of the strategic situation decreased, and towards the end of 1942 it had become apparent that substantial reductions could be and, in fact, were, made in the home-defence Forces.

A step had been taken during the period of crisis in the Pacific which contributed vitally to the success of the Allied Forces in Guadalcanal. This was the despatch of a substantial Force into the Pacific. This Force was later located in New Caledonia and became the Pacific Division. Its provision by New Zealand may well have been one of the factors which turned the balance and hence enabled large-scale reductions to be made in the home-defence Forces.

The implications of the new situation were diverse and complicated. The Middle East Division had been without reinforcements for more than a year, and needed men. The Air Force required men for the purposes of maintaining the Empire Air Training Scheme and for establishing a New Zealand Air Force in the Pacific (this being regarded as one of the best contributions to victory of which the Dominion was capable). The resources of the Royal Navy were stretched to the limit, and a resumption of the flow of recruits from New Zealand was urgently requested. At the same time each of the principal groups within the Dominion (including farming, sawmilling, construction, railways, and many of the manufacturing industries) required additional men if production was to be maintained at the necessary level.