

As regards munitions, the necessity to continue the manufacture of each line was carefully reviewed, and as a result of this review some hundreds of workers were transferred to other work. The Dominion's future munitions programme includes only those items for which there is an urgent demand. At the same time, a number of items for which orders had been received from the Eastern Group Supply Council had to be rejected owing to a lack of man-power or material in the particular industries concerned.

Among the remaining manufacturing industries there were demands for labour in the woollen-mills, tanneries, footwear, clothing, rubber, glass, and tobacco factories. These calls for labour were very insistent and covered a wide range of types of skilled and unskilled workers, male and female, running into many hundreds in all, and thousands if the lower-priority demands are included also.

On the other hand, it should be stated that there were a number of manufacturing industries (as well as other fields of employment) in which strongly-voiced demands for labour tended to arise, without it being evident that full use was being made of the labour force already attached to these industries. With man-power resources in such short supply as to limit the physical capacity of the Dominion's war effort in other fields of production, it cannot be admitted that demands of this nature should be met.

E. OTHER INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES

Labour shortages existed also in coal-mines, hospitals, mental hospitals, catering, and laundry services, while the American Forces (already regularly employing over 4,000 New-Zealanders on permanent and casual work) continued to make demands for labour. The demand for coal-miners has been particularly difficult to meet on account of the heavy and dirty nature of the work, the need for fitness and experience, the lack of adequate accommodation, and the remote localities in which the mines are situated.

The spheres of finance and commerce, wholesale and retail distribution, storage, administration, education, social services, entertainment, personal services, and the less-essential manufacturing industries had already suffered heavy reductions in male personnel, and, after replacing men with women, had already lost some of these women to higher-priority work and to the Forces, and had been forced on to lower grades of workers, including part-time, over-age, and juvenile workers.

Unless further workers were to be stripped out from these fields of employment, with consequent tendency to harshness and disruption, it was becoming clear that the satisfaction of labour demands in the *highest*-priority industries must become increasingly a matter of *circulation* of labour within the "essential" group of industries. The extent to which the curtailment of less-essential industries and services is carried must, of course, remain a matter of degree. The severity of the man-power position as a whole is reflected in these spheres in inconvenience and difficulties to employers and to the general public.

6. THE HANDLING OF THE SEASONAL LABOUR PROBLEM IN 1943-44

The rise and fall of industrial activity in the farming, food-processing, and related industries constitutes one of New Zealand's greatest labour problems.

For example, the freezing-works employ only 4,500 hands in a normal October, but by the end of January this figure rises to over 12,000, and then falls slowly back to 8,000 in June, dropping suddenly to 5,000 in July, and then slowly to 4,500 by October. The cycle is timed rather differently in the dairy factories, where the peak of 3,600 is reached in December, and the trough of 1,400 in July.

In the farming industries the season for haymaking, fruit-picking, and harvesting of crops each year brings demands for upwards of 12,000 additional hands, while vegetable-production, fruit-canning, and other seasonal industries all rise simultaneously to their peak.

Vegetable-production on a really large scale and dehydration of meat and vegetables are new developments which have set up both permanent and recurring (seasonal) demands for labour. For example, in October it was estimated that 300 *permanent* workers were needed for Services' vegetable-production projects, while the *seasonal* demand, superimposed on this permanent requirement, was estimated to rise from 300 in November to 1,500 in January, and thereafter to fall again.

Food-canning is another newly-expanded industry, the seasonal demand in this case rising to a peak of 700 workers in March.

Steps to meet this array of urgent and unavoidable demands for assistance in the current season have been as follows:—

(a) *Releases from Army*.—A special drive was made to secure release of the maximum number of farm workers *before* the peak of the season.

(b) *Women's Land Service*.—A drive for recruits resulted in an increase from 972 (early October, 1943) to 1,879 (end March, 1944).

(c) *Students, Teachers, &c.*—University students, lecturers, teachers, and senior school pupils were fully mobilized during their vacation for work in freezing-works, wool-stores, butter and cheese factories, and on farms. (Fuller details are given later in this report.)

(d) *Other Compulsory Directions*.—Fit men returned in groups from service in overseas garrisons and (where expedient) men selected for short-term Territorial service were in many cases diverted into the freezing-works by compulsory direction.

(e) *Army Harvesting Scheme*.—The scheme for short-term Territorial training was converted into a collective harvesting enterprise, thus taking advantage of—

(i) Use of Army tents, camp equipment, transport, field radios, &c.

(ii) Army organization, discipline, and experience in this work from the previous season, when the harvest was brought in more expeditiously than ever before in the history of the Dominion.

The classes of men from whom individuals were selected for this form of service were—

Single men, Grades I and II, aged eighteen to forty:

Married men without children, Grade I and II, aged eighteen to forty:

Married men with up to three children, Grades I and II, aged up to thirty.

Selection for service was carried out by Selection Committees comprising Army, Appeal Board, and Man-power representatives.

Certain classes—*e.g.*, miners, seamen, medical men, police, &c.—were not included in the selection.

Rates of pay for this work took the form of Army pay plus bonus of 6d. per hour for time up to 8 hours per day between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., or 2s. 6d. per hour for time outside these limits. Farmers were charged at 2s. 6d. per hour throughout.