

248. Releases from the Forces.—During the period June, 1942, to March, 1943, inclusive, Armed Forces Appeal Boards made recommendations for the release from military service of 112 persons for employment in textile and clothing manufacture. In the years ended 31st March, 1944, and 31st March, 1945, Armed Forces Appeal Boards and District Man-power Officers effected the release from the Forces of 290 and 297 persons respectively for employment in textile and clothing manufacture.

249. Numbers withheld from Military Service on Appeal.—Numbers of Grade I men held on appeal in the clothing and woollen manufacturing industries as at varying dates throughout the period of the war were as follows :—

—	31st March, 1943.	31st March, 1944.	28th Feb., 1945.	15th Aug., 1945.
Woollen and knitted goods manufacture	293	209	116	98
Silk-hosiery manufacture ..	17	19	6	7
Hats and millinery ..	13	10	4	3
Clothing-manufacture n.e.i. ..	145	128	71	55
Totals	468	366	197	163

250. As with other industries, the figures for 1943 and 1944 comprise all Grade I men aged twenty to forty inclusive and Air Force and naval volunteers, while the figures for 1945 relate only to Category “A” men.

(viii) Hospitals (Public, Private, and Mental and Sanatoria)

251. During the period of the war the staffing of hospitals and sanatoria was a constant source of difficulty to the Department, particularly in the larger public and mental hospitals. Hospitals have held a first priority in man-power throughout, and the utmost endeavours have continuously been made to ensure that all such institutions were adequately staffed.

252. Employments which are a charge on public moneys are slower than other employments in adjusting themselves to changed general conditions. This is due partly to the necessarily slower and more cautious tempo of public administration and partly to the reluctance of public bodies to commit themselves to new expenditure or new precedents until the case for such action (or the pressure for it) has become exceptionally strong. The changed conditions arising out of the war required, for example, a changed attitude towards hospital domestic workers in alignment with the new type of young woman who would have to be drawn into such work—women from shops, offices, and factories whose expectations regarding amenities, independence, and general treatment would have to be met. It required also a changed technique in campaigning for recruits as well as in selection, training, and supervision. Apart altogether from the question of whether or not wage-rates were at a sufficiently competitive level, these other matters required attention and outlay. Hospital Boards, particularly, have been slow to adapt themselves to changed general conditions, and consequently, as the over-all shortage of female labour reached an acute stage, many hospitals found themselves being out-stripped by other industry in the race for available labour, and consequently being left in a staffing position more acute than the average. At the same time hospitals had had additional burdens thrown on them, partly from the more progressive hospital benefits made available under the Social Security Act of 1938, and partly from the expansion of hospital facilities to cope with war casualties.

253. Nursing staffs were depleted to some extent by the contribution of nurses to the Forces, but the greatest need was for wardmaids and kitchen and laundry staffs.