

of new industries, opportunities of employment are almost unlimited, and a most acute shortage of male labour has been apparent. Consequently the staffing of any new works likely to commence must be a difficult problem and can only be achieved at the expense of other industrial activities under conditions of exceptionally keen competition for labour. The cancellation of war contracts, the change-over from wartime to peacetime production, and the laying-off of about 50 men in the motor-assembly plants provided a small measure of relief, but so great is the absorptive capacity of industry in this area that the overall position was hardly affected thereby. The key to the solution of adequate staffing of industry in the district is accommodation, and until sufficient houses, &c., can be provided to meet the needs of the Hutt Valley (and to some extent those of Wellington) comparatively little inflow of labour from other districts can be expected.

470. The female labour position is much the same as in the case of males, with a very marked shortage of labour, evident in a wide range of industrial undertakings and little prospect of the position being relieved to any extent for some considerable time. Notified vacancies (356 at 30th September, 1945) rose to a peak of 615 at 31st January, 1946. Since then there has been a slight fall to 584 on 31st March, 1946, but not sufficient to ease the position materially.

(a) *Building Industry.*—The main problem is the all-round shortage of labour, particularly of skilled tradesmen of all classes, but also of unskilled workers. This is reflected in the number of notified vacancies, which stood at 343 on 31st March, 1946. There were approximately 3 vacancies for skilled men for every unskilled vacancy. Though the supply of materials (particularly of timber) has been somewhat sporadic, the industry has managed to carry on fairly effectively and could increase its output if more labour (particularly skilled labour) was available.

(b) *Railway Workshops and General Engineering.*—The labour position at the Railway Workshops has shown some marked fluctuations during the period, with notified vacancies at 15th October, 1945, standing at 393, falling to 242 at 15th November, 1945, at which level it remained fairly constant until February, 1946, when a steep increase to 473 was shown, including 280 for skilled men. Outside competition has drawn labour away from the workshops, and this has partly accounted for the rise in vacancies. The prospects of materially relieving the position from local sources are not good. Shortages of labour in general engineering, apart from the Railway Workshops, have been steadily increasing, as shown by notified vacancies of 30 at 30th September, 1945, as compared with 72 at 31st March, 1946. Of the latter, 8 were for skilled men, 55 for unskilled men, and 9 for juveniles.

(c) *Local Authorities.*—There has been steady demand (mainly for unskilled labour) by local bodies in this area, although notified vacancies (64 at 15th October, 1945) fell off slightly to 50 at 31st March, 1946.

(d) *Freezing Industry.*—The seasonal requirements of the freezing-works for approximately 450 men presented some difficulties, and was met only by some loss of labour from other industries of lower priority. The provision of seasonal labour in this area will present a difficult problem next season, when no man-power control measures will be available.

(e) *Boot and Shoe Industry.*—This industry has experienced an acute shortage of labour, with notified female vacancies rising from 15 at 30th September, 1945, to 116 on 31st March, 1946 (80 skilled and 36 unskilled).

(f) *Hospitals.*—A fluctuating position has been shown at the Hutt and Silverstream Hospitals. At 31st October, 1945, there were no notified vacancies: at 31st December, 1945, there were 44, at 31st January, 1946, the number had fallen to 18, but climbed to 40 at 28th February, 1946; at 31st March, 1946, it stood at 36. The letting of a cleaning contract for the Hutt Hospital from 1st March, 1946, accounted for a small reduction in the number of notified vacancies.

Other industries reflect much the same labour shortage. Soap and candle works showed 65 vacancies at 31st March, 1946, as against 45 on 30th September, 1945; the woollen-mills showed 60, as against 47; laundries 25, as against 12, but with a decrease from 42 in February; biscuit and confectionery manufacture 30, as against 25; and so on—all these figures emphasize the scarcity of labour in the area. Any further expansion of industry in this area should obviously follow and not precede a solution of present accommodation difficulties.

(g) *Returned Servicemen.*—Under the circumstances noted above, it is not surprising that the placement of returned servicemen has presented no difficulties, nor are any difficulties in this direction anticipated.

Wellington District

471. This district is in much the same position as Lower Hutt. Notified vacancies for males have exceeded on an average the numbers of persons seeking employment by approximately 421 to 1 over the period. In general, no difficulties have been presented in finding employment for all seeking it, whether skilled or unskilled, although in some cases those seeking clerical work or employment as drivers, salesmen, or