

peak figure of 92 at 31st January, 1946, to 75 at 31st March, 1946. The maximum number of female workers enrolled at any one time for employment was 4, whereas the notified vacancies were 929 at 30th September, 1945, 1,885 at 31st December, 1945, 1,439 at 28th February, 1946, and 1,827 at 31st March, 1946. A marked shortage of female labour has been apparent, with all-round shortages existing in a wide range of industrial and servicing activities.

(a) *Building Industry*.—Despite shortages of materials (particularly timber, building steel, and cement) notified vacancies, which at 30th September, 1945, were 71, rose to a peak of 162 on 15th January, 1946, and then fell to 131 at 31st March, 1946 (118 for skilled, 8 for unskilled, and 5 for juveniles). The greater proportion of the demands were thus for skilled tradesmen, while the demands for builders' labourers and apprentices have been very limited. If additional tradesmen became available to this industry, there would, no doubt, be increased demands for unskilled men, though irregularity of supplies of materials at times presents difficulties.

(b) *Engineering Industry*.—Though notified male vacancies have fluctuated to some extent, the trend over the period has been upwards—viz., from 34 at 31st September, 1945, to 62 on 31st March, 1946 (39 for skilled, 3 for unskilled, and 20 for juveniles). The main demand is thus for tradesmen, while few vacancies arise for unskilled labour other than in heavy foundry work. There were limited female vacancies (22 at 31st March, 1946), mainly for juveniles required mainly for light-metal assembly work.

(c) *Farming Industry*.—Demands for labour (particularly for tractor-drivers and for experienced general farm hands) were fairly steady over the period, and especially so from agricultural farms, though as placements have been made in many cases the trend has been for a steadily declining balance. Overall demands for male labour from all farms which at 30th September, 1945, were 84, fell to 45 at 31st December, 1945, and to 15 at 31st March, 1946. Vacancies for married couples offering suitable accommodation, or for inexperienced labour other than youths, have been very limited. Though there was a definite shortage of both blade and machine shearers during the period of this seasonal work (October to February), especially upon the return of some of the shearers to the freezing-works, the labour demands were met with the full co-operation of the Primary Production Committees in arranging runs. Harvesting operations were completed, with only an occasional demand made for labour at any time during the season, due to the greater use of mechanical means, the return of men from the Armed Forces, and the favourable weather experienced during the harvesting season.

(d) *Freezing-works*.—No difficulties were experienced in the staffing of the various works in this district, and they were better staffed than at any time during recent years.

(e) *Clothing-factories*.—By far the most marked shortage of female labour occurred in this industry, and although a somewhat fluctuating demand has occurred, the trend is upwards; as experienced operatives are not available, most demands were for unskilled persons. (Notified female vacancies, 30th September, 1945, 366; 15th November, 1945, 286; 15th December, 1945, 561; 31st January, 1946, 391, and 31st March, 1946, 673.) Demands are greatly above pre-war figures, with little prospect of the position being alleviated. Some local firms are increasing the numbers of male machinists, and should their employment prove successful it is likely that other firms will follow their example.

(f) *Hospitals*.—Shortages of female staff remained fairly constant, though the heaviest demands occurred at 31st December, 1945 (notified female vacancies, 30th September, 1945, 189; 31st December, 1945, 228; and 31st March, 1946, 186). Shortages of domestic staff were most in evidence, although in the mental hospital most of the needs were for nursing staff. Despite every endeavour to improve the position (including broadcasting and newspaper publicity), the staffing position remained acute throughout the period.

(g) *Footwear Industry*.—Steadily rising demands, mainly for female labour, have been in evidence, with notified vacancies rising from 101 at 30th September, 1945, to 169 at 31st March, 1946 (37 skilled, 94 unskilled, and 38 juveniles). The possibilities of employing male machinists have been considered, and endeavours are being made in some cases to man machines, previously operated by females, with male labour, enabling the placement of a number of semi-fit men to be effected.

(h) *Woollen and Knitting Mills*.—Demands for female labour, which at 30th September, 1945, were 40, rose steeply by 31st October, 1945, to 134, and have since remained fairly steady, being 143 on 31st March, 1946. As experienced operatives are not available, all demands are for unskilled women and girls.

(i) *Hotels and Restaurants*.—Shortages of domestic staff have remained constant, with notified vacancies rising from 126 at 30th September, 1945, to 179 at 15th February, 1946, and since falling to 108 at 31st March, 1946.

(j) *Other Industries*.—Notified vacancies in some of the other industries at the end of March, 1945, were—retail shops, 28 males and 70 females; rubber-manufacture, 51 females; printing and publishing, 50 females; and the leather trade, 45 females. Somewhat fluctuating demands for labour