

have arisen in the fertilizer-works, depending on arrival of shipments of phosphate rock and orders received from farmers for prepared fertilizer. The closing-down at the end of December, 1945, of the Internal Marketing Department's dehydration plant, involving 122 females and 54 males, provided a temporary problem in reabsorption of the discharged labour.

(k) *Returned Servicemen*.—No difficulties have arisen over the placement of fit skilled or unskilled ex-servicemen, and at the end of March, 1945, there were none enrolled as seeking employment. The majority have been returning to their pre-service employment. Placement of semi-fit men has presented some difficulties, but new avenues of employment in footwear and clothing factories have opened up possibilities of meeting the demands of these men satisfactorily.

Ashburton District

479. The employment position has been reasonably good, though during the months of November and December, 1945, opportunities of employment offering (just prior to the commencement of seasonal activities) were restricted. On average, during the period notified vacancies for males were three times as great as the number of men enrolled for employment. Generally speaking, it has been possible to effect placement of men registering for employment with relatively little difficulty. The locating of light work has, however, been difficult, as there was only a limited number of such positions offering. Female labour has been in short supply, with never more than two disengaged, as against an average of 33 notified vacancies, largely from the woollen mills.

(a) *Farming Industry*.—Notified vacancies for all farming have been showing a gradually declining trend, from 30 at 30th September, 1945 to 7 at 31st March, 1946. Most demands have been for competent tractor-drivers and general farm hands, and the majority of vacancies have been satisfactorily met. When compared with the demands of the previous four years, the numbers of notified vacancies for harvesting were almost negligible, no more than an occasional demand being received. The demobilization of members of the Armed Forces, combined with the lesser area sown in wheat during the season just past and poorer crop yields, accounted for this position.

(b) *Freezing Industry*.—No difficulties arose in the filling of the demands of this seasonal industry.

(c) *Woollen and Knitting Mills*.—This industry was the only one which experienced any marked shortages of female labour, though the position did not become worse over the period (notified vacancies at 30th September, 1945, 29; 30th November, 1945, 20; and 31st March, 1946, 30). The abnormal numbers of workers terminating their employment through marriages to ex-servicemen and the lifting of man-power controls had their effect in causing shortages in the industry. As a result a trial was made with the employment of a few males as weavers on machines formerly operated by females, and indications are that, in view of the encouraging reports on their progress, this industry will engage further males for work generally carried out by women.

(d) *Other Industries*.—In no other industry was there any marked shortage of labour, either male or female. For females, at 31st March, 1946, there were 5 notified vacancies in the railways. No vacancies were recorded for either hospitals or hotels and restaurants. For males, at the same date, the building industry had only 3 vacancies notified.

(e) *Returned Servicemen*.—The placement of ex-servicemen has proceeded steadily during the period, and, although at 31st March, 1946, 2 were registered as still seeking employment, no particular difficulties were anticipated in suitably placing these or any other ex-servicemen subsequently registering with the Department.

Timaru District

480. The number of notified vacancies for males was, on average, approximately equal to the number of those disengaged and seeking employment through the Department, and the employment opportunities were not so numerous as was the case in other centres. Nevertheless, although opportunities of employment offering have been comparatively limited, the numbers of those registered as disengaged dropped from 88 in October, 1945, to 15 in March, 1946. This drop in numbers coincided largely with the period of seasonal activities, although it occurred when up to a hundred or more ex-servicemen were being reabsorbed into industry each month. Some disengaged persons living in the smaller centres—e.g., Temuka, Waimate, Geraldine—who were unwilling or unable, mainly through lack of suitable accommodation, to accept employment elsewhere have not been easy to place in employment. The female labour position, on the other hand, continued to show an average of 78 notified vacancies, and never more than 3 registered as disengaged and seeking employment, and there appears little immediate prospect of relieving the position.