

187. At 28th February, 1945, 1,112 Category "A" men were held in the industry on appeal.

188. Shipping between the North and South Islands remained a serious problem, and again the policy of directing all available man-power to North Island mills was followed.

189. In the year ended 31st March, 1946, owing to the housing situation, the demand for timber again exceeded the supply, and the man-power content of the industry continued to be safeguarded by a strict surveillance of applications to leave the industry. A further 58 men were released from the Forces to the industry by the direct action of District Man-power Officers from 15th August, 1945, to 31st March, 1946. As at VJ Day, 1,051 Category "A" men were held in the industry on Appeal.

(iv) Building and Construction

190. At the outbreak of war the labour force in the building and construction industry was mainly engaged on housing construction. As mobilization proceeded, the construction of military camps was undertaken, but in the early stages no decisive moves were called for to protect the labour force in the industry. As the war situation developed, so the emphasis moved from housing construction to works directly associated with the war effort. The issue of building permits was controlled by the Building Controller, and by March, 1941, the following preference in the issue of permits was being adhered to:—

Defence works.

Hospital construction.

Storage of primary produce, new dairy factories, &c.

New factories for secondary industries.

Housing construction.

Other building works.

There was, however, no difficulty in manning important jobs.

191. By November, 1941, the industry generally was working from forty-five to fifty-four hours a week.

192. The entry of Japan into the war in December, 1941, caused the industry to advance almost immediately from one of no great priority to one of high priority. An enormous defence-construction programme had to be undertaken, and this necessitated immediate steps to ensure that military works were adequately manned. Defence works became a first priority, while housing and other building works were brought almost to a standstill.

193. In March, 1942, defence works, which included building and construction for the Army, Navy, and Air Force and the construction of hospitals, cool-stores, freezing-works, air-raid shelters, and factories whose production was mainly for war purposes, were covered by a declaration of essentiality, and workers with experience in the building industry were required to register with District Man-power Officers, who were thus able to divert them from low priority to high priority jobs. Building Committees were established in each district with separate sub-committees to deal with the allocation of labour. In order to fulfil the defence-works programme, mobility of labour was essential, and (working in collaboration with Building Committees) District Man-power Officers arranged transfers of groups of workers and individual workers as required. Provision was made in March, 1942, in the Defence Works Labour Legislation Suspension Order 1942 for the working of a minimum fifty-four-hour week on defence works.

In June, 1942, the minimum weekly hours of work were reduced to forty-eight.