

202. The Essential Building Works Labour Legislation Modification Order 1943 was revoked on 1st August, 1945, thus permitting employees engaged on work coming within the scope of the Order to revert to a forty-hour week. The revocation of the Order necessitated a revocation of the declarations of essentiality relating to the industry, and new declarations were gazetted covering the construction of hospital, and school buildings (including alterations and additions), and the building of new houses—both State and private. Other high priority building and constructional works, such as hydro-electric schemes, were individually declared essential where the jobs could not be adequately manned on a voluntary basis. At the same time it was arranged that the National Building Committee and District Building Committees set up under the Essential Building Works Labour Legislation Modification Order 1943 should function as the National Man-power Utilization Council and District Man-power Utilization Committees for the building industry.

203. Nevertheless, despite the steadily increasing flow of man-power back into the industry from the overseas Forces since the end of hostilities and the further direction of some 3,250 other personnel into the industry over the twelve months ended on 31st March, 1946, overall vacancies in the industry remained at the high figure of 1,818 on the 31st March, 1946.

204. Numbers of Grade I men held in the industry on appeal as at varying dates was as follows :—

31st March, 1943	1,820	} Grade I men aged twenty to forty years inclusive.
31st March, 1944	1,926	
28th February, 1945	1,020	} Grade I men aged twenty-one to thirty-five years inclusive with fewer than three children and having had less than three years' overseas service.
15th August, 1945	658	

(v) Coalmining

205. Because of the direct and indirect dependence of so many essential services, factories, &c., on the coal-mining industry, the production of coal has remained a first priority throughout the war. The difficulties of the Department in ensuring an adequate supply of labour in the mines were accentuated by reason of the normal high wastage from the industry, the shortage of fit men other than those held on appeal, lack of suitable accommodation in mining townships, and the heavy nature of the work and industrial risks involved.

206. Increased production was achieved as a consequence of the opening-up of opencast mines, increased use of machines, the voluntary working of additional hours, and the building-up of the labour force in the industry from 4,939 in 1939 to 5,705 in October, 1945. Production rose gradually from 2,342,639 tons in 1939 to 2,805,970 tons in 1944 and 2,833,576 tons in 1945, constituting an all-time record for the Dominion.

207. The distribution of the labour force in the industry as at October, 1945, was as follows :—

West Coast and Nelson	2,521
Waikato and Whangarei	2,169
Otago and Southland	913
Canterbury and South Canterbury	102
Total	5,705

Mine-workers as a class were withheld from military service in order to protect the industry, and wherever possible the Department arranged for the release and direction back to the mines of Armed Forces personnel with previous mining experience. Inexperienced men in the Forces volunteering for work in the mines were also released and placed under direction to the industry.