

7. LOCATION OF POPULATION

Approximately two-thirds of the European population of New Zealand live in the North Island, and only one-third in the South Island. This reverses the position of eighty years ago.

Approximately 63 per cent. of the population live in urban areas and 37 per cent. in counties. The population movement to urban areas is continuing. This is due not so much to what is called a drift away from agricultural pursuits, as to technological changes in agriculture. Many of those engaged in the servicing of agriculture, who previously were resident in rural areas, are now classified as urban dwellers. Statistical changes also tend artificially to increase the number of urban dwellers.

The population of Canterbury, Otago, and Southland, and particularly of the latter two, shows a serious decline in the rural areas over the last ten years. There were approximately 13,000 less people living in rural districts in Otago and Southland in 1945 than in 1936. The decline in rural population in Canterbury, Nelson, and some of the other provinces, though not so great, is still serious. This problem calls for an early investigation.

The tendency for industry to congregate in the four main centres may create serious economic and social difficulties. From every point of view the decentralization of certain industries should be encouraged. Among the more positive incentives to this decentralization would be a decision to provide more housing in some of the smaller towns so that the working population would have adequate living accommodation. Certain of the lighter types of industry where transport costs are small compared with the total costs, would undoubtedly follow such population movements.

8. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION

The numbers engaged in agricultural pursuits have tended to increase at practically the same rate as the total occupied population of the Dominion. This means that the relative position of agriculture in the matter of employment opportunities has been maintained.

Contrary to general impression, the numbers engaged in secondary industries have, up to the moment, not increased at a greater rate than the numbers of total occupied personnel. The number engaged in tertiary industries, however, has tended to increase very steadily. Some of these trends have been affected by the recent war.

9. AGRICULTURE

There is relatively little land, available and suitable for settlement, at present unoccupied. The Lands and Survey Department estimates that to settle the returned servicemen desiring to take up agriculture it will be necessary to purchase up to 800,000 acres of land at present occupied.

The National Employment Service states that the demand for agricultural labour is falling off.

There is therefore no necessity for the State to organize the immigration of either agriculturalists or agricultural labourers into the Dominion.

10. COAL-MINING

Though the number engaged in coal-mining and the output have increased, coal-supplies are inadequate to meet our present needs. The explanation is to be found largely in the increased demand because of the increase in population, the increase in transport, the increase in industrial use, and the non-availability of imports. There is scope for the immigration of coal-miners.