

95. The same information also enables temporary transfers of labour to be arranged from areas where between-seasonal employment is scarce, to areas where the men concerned can continue to make a full contribution to productive activities, action which at the same time effects large savings in the payment of unemployment benefits.

96. Knowledge of the labour available for building and construction activities also enables demands for labour and materials to be maintained at a better balance as between Government and non-Government activities.

97. Information on labour shortages and the rate of expansion of industries in different localities also plays an important part in determining where the emphasis should be placed on housing programmes, hostels, and other forms of accommodation. Careful alignment between the availability of labour and the availability of accommodation facilitates the movement of industry to areas with reserve pools of labour available or the movement of labour from such areas to industrial centres. As a rapid means of assisting alignment, special workers' camps or hostel accommodation are being provided to assist in meeting employment difficulties. The Department has established hostels and camps in Auckland, Wellington, and Lower Hutt (see Section IV of Part I of this report).

98. While the above are the more obvious lines of action available to secure the best possible balance in our industrial activities under conditions of general labour shortage, other lines of action have also been taken up. Thus the relationship of employment information to policy in such fields as import control, price-fixing, and stabilization is now coming under study. Employment information is also an important factor in adult trade-training policy and in vocational guidance, both of which bring influences to bear upon the inflow and distribution of the labour force.

99. Apart from activities directed towards influencing the supply and distribution of available labour, it has also been possible to take action towards securing the use of this available labour to better advantage. The placement activities of the Department, combined with its knowledge of how the employment position is developing in each area and its facilities for arranging transfers of labour and providing accommodation, have reduced the numbers of unemployed persons (including such categories as semi-fit persons, disabled persons, seasonal workers, &c.) to negligible proportions. These placement activities have also greatly reduced the number of man-hours lost by workers in changing from job to job. As a result of the availability of information on labour turnover, a number of employers, moreover, are already devoting closer attention to this problem and taking steps to reduce its dimensions.

100. The Department has also, on numerous occasions, taken special steps to assist individual employers to overcome particular bottlenecks and other difficulties and to maintain staffs and output in critical lines.

SECTION IV.—UNEMPLOYMENT AND SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT

101. The past year, the second post-war year of reconstruction, has seen unemployment in this country reduced to extremely low levels. The year commenced in April, 1946, with 402 males and 24 females at that point enrolled with the Department as unemployed. The tapering-off of seasonal activities on farms, in freezing-works, dairy factories, wool-stores, &c., over the months of April to July, 1946, inclusive, resulted in heavier registrations of male workers, and particularly of unskilled men, being received. In addition, ex-servicemen, on completion of their discharge leave, were still coming to the Department in fairly large numbers over this period for assistance in locating suitable employment. The Department, however, was able to keep pace with these registrations, and 15th July of last year, which marked the peak of unemployment over the twelve months, saw only 592 males and 19 females enrolled as unemployed. Since this date the numbers enrolled at the end of each monthly period have been substantially reduced,