

Paeroa District

(Estimated male labour force, 11,600)

118. Dairy and other farming, together with gold-mining, are the major primary industries in the district, while forestry, bush sawmilling, and quarrying also play an important part. Nearly 750 male workers are engaged in secondary industries, of which the engineering group—i.e., general engineering, electrical manufacture, and vehicle and cycle repair—is the most important. Building and construction, transport, shops and offices require their quota of male employees, while dairy factories, with a peak of nearly 300 men, including some 100 male seasonal employees, are also of importance. For females, hospitals, hotels, shops, and other servicing industries, together with clothing, footwear, electrical, and toy manufacture provide the main avenues of employment. Further decentralization of activities from the Auckland urban area to Paeroa, Thames, and Waihi took place during the past twelve months, while the construction of a new timber-mill at Paeroa was completed.

Notified vacancies for males rose from 84 on 1st April, 1946, to 144 by 31st October, 1946, but fell to 92 on 31st March, 1947 (78 for skilled and 14 for unskilled men, no juveniles being required at this date). Female vacancies declined over the period from 83 on 1st April, 1946, to 60 by 31st March, 1947 (12 for skilled and 8 for unskilled workers, together with 40 for juveniles).

Male notified vacancies on farms during the earlier part of the dairy season reached a maximum of only 18 on 30th September, 1946, and were down to 2 by 31st March, 1947. Most calls were for single farm hands and were not easily met. Vacancies offering married accommodation were, however, quickly satisfied. The demand for labour in dairy factories reached a peak on 30th September, 1946, when male vacancies totalled 49. By the height of the season in December, 1946, vacancies had been reduced to 25, and on 31st March, 1947, were down to 6.

Thames is the centre of engineering and metal-working industries in the district. Male vacancies in these industries rose from 9 on 30th September, 1946, to 66 by 31st October, 1946, and still totalled 59 on 31st March, 1947. All of these latter vacancies were for skilled engineering tradesmen. The demand for female labour in clothing-factories remained fairly constant throughout the past twelve months, but the 40 vacancies recorded on 31st March, 1947, were all for juveniles. On 31st March, 1947, the building and construction industry was seeking 11 building tradesmen. Hospital vacancies were slowly reduced from 21 on 1st April, 1946, to 12 by 31st March, 1947 (6 for nurses and 6 for domestic workers).

The gold-mining industry is most important in Waihi, and for the past twelve months the number of employees has been maintained. At the end of March, 1947, vacancies notified to the Department totalled 9, mainly for fit unskilled men prepared to undertake underground work. It is known, however, that this industry could absorb many more experienced men if they were available.

Rotorua District

(Estimated male labour force, 15,400)

119. Apart from farming activities, this district employs approximately 2,100 male workers in bush sawmilling and afforestation industries, 1,400 in building and construction, 800 in transport and communication, 1,900 in shops, offices, and other services, and 1,200 in manufacturing industries. Seasonal fluctuations are slight, being confined to haymaking, maize-picking, shearing, and some dairy factories.

Early in the year it became clear that strenuous efforts would be necessary to maintain continuity of employment for male labour in this district. Public-works activity, curtailed during the war years, had not expanded since, while Native development schemes, through shortages of fertilizer and other essential materials, were reducing staff. Both had been important employing agencies prior to the war. There were fairly heavy enrolments for employment (particularly of Maoris) consequent upon demobilization and the return to the district of persons who had been working elsewhere during the war. As far as possible these men were placed in available employment in the district, afforestation in particular absorbing 60, but despite this the numbers of males seeking work rose from 9 on 1st April, 1946, to 110 on 31st July, 1946. To assist the position, arrangements were made for the commencement of scheduled but hitherto deferred highways-improvement projects, which absorbed over 150 men. In addition, many of the enrollees evinced willingness to accept work in other districts. More than 50 Maori unskilled workers (including a number who had previously gone on to public works) were transferred to dairy factories in Taranaki as soon as the season took up. On 31st March, 1947, the numbers seeking work in the district stood at only 10 males and no females.

This district is much in need of further industrial enterprise of a permanent nature to provide local employment for both the present male adult Maori workers and the growing number of Maori youths who will be seeking employment in the years ahead.