

130. These figures and those for the Lower Hutt district emphasize the intense and growing competition for labour in these two areas, and the commencement of any new undertakings in the early future can only add pressure to the already existing heavy demand for labour. New industries setting up in either area will be confronted with most formidable staffing difficulties, and the resultant increased competition for labour could only have adverse effects on production from existing units.

Engineering and Metal Working Group of Industries.—Male vacancies in this group of industries have jumped from 233 at 1st April, 1946, to 711 at 31st March, 1947. These latter vacancies included 339 in general engineering, 128 in electrical manufacture, 104 in the manufacture and repair of ships, engines, &c., and 126 in vehicle and cycle, &c., manufacture and repair. Some 383 of the current vacancies were for skilled workers, indicating the heavy demand for engineering tradesmen. In addition to the above requirements for male labour, there were 207 female vacancies in these industries at 31st March, 1947, including 131 in electrical manufacture.

Building and Construction Industry.—After reaching a peak of 436 at 30th June, 1946, male vacancies eased off for the remainder of the period, but by 31st March, 1947, still totalled 384. Some 228 of these vacancies, or three out of each five, required tradesmen, the balance calling for 145 unskilled men and 11 juveniles.

Printing, Bookbinding, &c., Industry.—Both male and female vacancies have mounted steadily over the period. By 31st March, 1947, these totalled 157 for males and 231 for females, as compared with 37 for males and 92 for females at 1st April, 1946. Of current vacancies, 115 for men and 120 for women require skilled workers. The unit most seriously affected in this industry in the district has been the Government Printing Office.

Clothing-manufacture.—The acute and growing shortage of female labour for clothing-factories is reflected in the sharp rise in female vacancies from 381 at 1st April, 1946, to 932 at 31st March, 1947. Machinists are most heavily in demand, with skilled vacancies totalling 645.

Hospitals.—Female vacancies reached a peak of 354 in May, 1946, but had eased off to 299 by 31st March, 1947 (191 for kitchen, laundry and domestic staff, 62 for nurses, and 46 for the mental hospital). A campaign for household staff initiated and conducted by the Department during the year on behalf of the Hospital Board resulted in the services of approximately 300 women being obtained for this work. The benefit of this recruitment drive was, however, largely offset by substantial terminations occurring over the period.

Wholesale and Retail Trade.—Increasing shortages of both male and female labour sought by wholesalers and shops are indicated by the rising vacancies for males from 73 at 1st April, 1946, to 235 at 31st March, 1947, and from 51 for females to 199 over the same period.

Other Industries.—Shortages of labour over many other industries are similarly evident in this district—e.g., tobacco-manufacture notified 105 female vacancies at 31st March, 1947, hotels and restaurants 112 female vacancies, footwear-manufacture 93 vacancies for females and 66 for males, chemicals, &c., manufacture (including match-factory) 108 female vacancies, rail and tramway transport 105 male vacancies, and so on. All these emphasize the difficulties being experienced to-day by all industrial undertakings in the district in obtaining a full quota of labour to satisfy existing demands.

Blenheim District

(Estimated male labour force, 6,700)

131. Although essentially a primary-producing area, with farming of major importance, this district to-day employs more than 2,500 males and nearly 1,000 females in secondary and servicing industries. Recent months have seen the establishment in Picton of a branch factory for the manufacture of slippers, while elsewhere in the district a glove-factory and a building for tire-retreading are under construction. Seasonal fluctuations in employment are fairly marked since the various phases of farming operations, work on orchards and in packing-sheds, freezing-works, grain and wool stores, dairy factories, a linen-flax factory, and whaling result in varying demands being received from month to month each year, particularly for male unskilled labour. The employment position was kept well in hand, however, and even with the tapering-off of the killing season in the Picton Freezing-works last year the number of male enrollees rose only to 37 on 30th June, 1946. With this margin of labour temporarily available it became possible to undertake work on the Picton-Blenheim highway deviation job.

Male vacancies declined from 46 on 1st April, 1946, to 25 on 30th June, 1946, increased to 70 on 30th November, 1946, but were down to 23 on 31st March, 1947 (9 for skilled and 6 for unskilled men; 8 for juveniles). Female vacancies rose from 67 on 1st April, 1946, to 86 by 28th February, 1947, and fell to 78 on 31st March, 1947 (19 for skilled and 47 for unskilled women, with 12 for juveniles). No heavy demands were received for general farm hands during the year, the highest number of vacancies