

recorded being only 17 in February, 1947, of which only one remained in March. Some difficulties, however, arose in securing musterers, shed hands, and shearers. Sufficient labour was obtained for harvesting work on threshing-mills, and on orchards for the fruit-picking season. The Picton Freezing-works were adequately manned for the season. A difficult position faced the Wairau Hospital Board in the past year with female vacancies numbering 36 on 1st April, 1946, 41 on 30th November, 1946, and 31 on 31st March, 1947 (14 for nurses and 17 for domestic staff). On this latter date, female vacancies in clothing and footwear factories stood at 10 in each case, with 13 vacancies in retail shops.

Nelson District

(Estimated male labour force, 10,300)

132. The economy of Nelson depends largely on seasonal labour to gather the harvests of fruit, hops, raspberries, and tobacco, and in the processing and canning industries dependent on these crops. The tobacco fields cover 3,500 acres and produce between 3,000,000 lb. and 4,000,000 lb. of tobacco annually. The hop fields cover 650 acres, with an average yield in a normal year of 3,500 bales (9,375 cwt.). Large numbers of workers, mostly female, come into the district each season, returning to their own districts at the finish of the seasonal activity. The number of vacancies filled through the agency of the Department during the current season up to the end of March, 1947, totalled over 1,500. In addition, a limited number of male workers is engaged each season in the Stoke Freezing-works and in dairy factories. A number of other secondary industries are also operating in the district and, together with the servicing and distribution industries, as well as bush sawmilling and afforestation, provide a wide range of employment for some 4,500 male and 1,650 female workers.

Male vacancies rose steadily from 25 on 1st April, 1946, to a maximum of 193 by 30th November 1946, but eased off to 137 at the end of March, 1947 (74 for skilled and 46 for unskilled men, 17 for juveniles). Although vacancies for unskilled male workers were at a very low level during the months of April to August, 1946, inclusive, no difficulties arose in suitably placing all men registering for employment. The number of male workers seeking employment did not at any time exceed five. Female vacancies increased from 65 on 1st April, 1946, to 130 by 30th November, 1946, but fell to 109 on 31st March, 1947.

Vacancies in building and construction rose from 17 on 1st April, 1946, to 61 by 30th November, 1946, and still totalled 51 on 31st March, 1947 (30 for tradesmen, 17 for labourers, and 4 for juveniles). These latter vacancies included 16 for tradesmen (mainly carpenters) for work at the Cobb River hydro-electric dam. The construction work on the transmission line between Nelson and the West Coast is also absorbing labour. In bush sawmilling notified vacancies reached a peak of 39 on 30th November, 1946, but were down to 16 by 31st March, 1947 (10 for skilled and 6 for unskilled men). Although numbers of workers were placed in this industry, difficulties arose in meeting the full labour requirements where accommodation was lacking.

A serious position has faced hospitals in the district in the past twelve months, particularly the mental hospital. Vacancies stood at 50 on 31st March, 1947. These included 43 for probationary nurses in the mental hospital.

Westport District

(Estimated male labour force, 3,700)

133. Coal-mining, with approximately 900 men employed, is the predominating industry in this district, while road and rail transport industries, together with bush-sawmilling, building, engineering (mainly Railway Workshops), and servicing industries (shops, offices, &c.) all require smaller numbers of male employees. With relatively few vacancies offering outside the coal-mining and sawmilling industries, considerable difficulty arises in the placement of semi-fit and older male workers enrolling for employment, and the district is in need of light secondary industries offering scope for the employment of men no longer physically able to undertake the more arduous work in mines and sawmills. For female workers retail shops, hospitals, hotels and restaurants, and a hosiery-factory provide a large proportion of the district's employment opportunities.

A build-up of workers in the coal-mines has taken place, particularly in October, 1946, when, as a result of radio publicity, there was a substantial inflow of men from the Christchurch districts particularly to the Denniston Collieries. With the absorption of these men and the subsequent transfer of a number of truckers to work on the coal face, the industry became able to engage further men. Thus the 38 vacancies recorded in April, 1946, were reduced to 7 by 30th November, 1946, after which date the build-up in men raised more vacancies, 22 remaining on 31st March, 1947.