

In bush sawmilling fit, experienced, and skilled men are mainly required, and such workers are extremely difficult to locate, either in this or in any other district. Although every endeavour was made to assist the position, vacancies at 31st March, 1947, still totalled 36 (35 for skilled men and 1 for a juvenile). Shortage of suitable accommodation at the present time at most of the sawmills has contributed to the difficulty of filling vacancies. It is expected, however, that the implementation of the sawmill accommodation improvement scheme will go a long way towards attracting more labour to the sawmilling industry.

A difficult position has faced the various hospital institutions under the Buller Hospital Board in the past twelve months. Although limited relief has been possible, the over-all situation has not improved, and at 31st March, 1947, a total of 21 vacancies were advised (16 for nurses and trainees and 5 for domestic staff).

Greymouth District

(Estimated male labour force, 8,300)

134. With a large part of its industrial activities concentrated in coal and other mining and sawmilling this district has maintained a strong demand for fit men for these industries. Opportunities for men who have not the fitness necessary in these occupations have not been numerous and, although industrial development in the district is going forward, there is still ample scope for the establishment of industries offering lighter forms of work. Similarly, there is scope for the further employment of women in the area, and an expansion of activity in secondary industry which has latterly taken place has indicated the availability of female staff for such undertakings. The insufficiency of suitable accommodation adjacent to work offering in the coal-mines and bush sawmills has placed particular difficulties in the way of meeting unsatisfied demands for male labour in these industries. Successful efforts made by the Department during the year towards securing suitable accommodation in mining areas enabled the staffing of some of the coal-mines to be substantially bettered. In addition, arrangements are now in hand for the erection of a hostel at Reefton to provide accommodation for workers in mines and other industries in this area. Arrangements have also been finalized, under a special housing scheme, for the erection of prefabricated housing units in bush sawmilling areas to provide accommodation for married men. These measures should assist materially in enabling greater numbers of workers to be drawn both to the coal-mines and sawmills in this district.

Vacancies in coal-mines stood at 37 on 31st March, 1947 (18 for skilled and 19 for unskilled men). At this date, truckers and hewers were in approximately equal demand. The demand for male labour for sawmills fluctuated throughout the year. At 31st March, 1947, male notified vacancies numbered 46, as compared with 90 on 1st April, 1946. Only skilled bushmen and sawmill hands are required in the great majority of the mills. Male labour has also been in strong demand by the Railways Department. At 31st March, 1947, there were 44 vacancies for unskilled men and 16 requiring tradesmen.

Despite continuous efforts made on behalf of the hospitals, considerable difficulties have arisen in the staffing of the public and mental hospitals in this district, and female vacancies rose from 29 on 1st April, 1946, to 60 by 31st March, 1947 (22 for nurses and trainees, 17 for domestic staff, and 21 in the mental hospital). Female vacancies at 31st March, 1947, totalled 9 in hotels and restaurants, while those in clothing-factories numbered 7.

The increased output of coal and timber which is in sight as a result of the additional accommodation now planned can be expected to throw an increased burden on transport facilities in this district, with consequent further demands for labour in various directions. Should major improvement works be undertaken on the Greymouth Harbour a further strong demand for male labour would arise.

Christchurch District

(Estimated male labour force, 56,100)

135. Christchurch, while being the centre of a wide range of secondary and servicing industries, is also the centre of one of the most important farming areas in New Zealand. Fairly marked shortages of both male and female labour have been evident in the past twelve months. These labour shortages have, however, largely been confined to the Christchurch urban area, and only limited demands for labour have been forthcoming from the remainder of the district. In common with the position in the other main urban centres, female labour shortages have continued undiminished, while the unsatisfied demand for male labour has steadily increased.