

136. Male notified vacancies mounted during the year from 363 at 1st April, 1946, to 1,060 at 31st March, 1947. Demands for unskilled labour showed the most substantial increase, vacancies rising from 72 to 416 over the period. Juvenile vacancies rose from 100 at 1st April, 1946, to 301 at the end of March, 1947. Female notified vacancies, already at the high level of 1,827 on 1st April, 1946, climbed to a peak of 2,349 in November, and then fell slightly to 2,215 by 31st March, 1947. Vacancies for unskilled female workers showed little variation, rising from 953 to 981 over the twelve months. Juvenile workers were in demand to the extent of 658 on 1st April, 1946, 1,021 by 30th November, 1946, and 857 on 31st March, 1947. Skilled vacancies for females increased from 216 on 1st April, 1946, to 377 twelve months later.

137. The year commenced with 82 males and 2 females enrolled with the Department as seeking work on 1st April, 1946. In most instances these enrollees were only partially employable through physical limitations, ill health, or other causes. Concentrated efforts made on behalf of these and other cases enrolling during the year and the ready co-operation on the part of a number of employers, enabled suitable placements to be effected in most instances. As a result, by 31st March, 1947, there remained only 5 males and no females still enrolled for employment.

138. Several new industrial undertakings commenced operations in the Christchurch area in the past year. Competition in industry for the engagement of workers continues to be fairly severe, and it must be stressed that the advent of new undertakings under such conditions (apart from the extreme staffing difficulties which those undertakings themselves will experience) increases the competition for labour and renders it more difficult for established firms to maintain their existing staffs at the desired level.

139. The position in some of the larger industries is now referred to :—

Engineering Industry.—Male vacancies have risen from 62 at 1st April, 1946, to 282 at 31st March, 1947. Current vacancies included 106 for skilled men, 101 for unskilled men, and 75 for juveniles. At 31st March, 1947, there also remained vacancies totalling 59 for female workers, mainly on unskilled repetitive work in the industry.

Building Industry.—Demands for male workers have fluctuated during the year though the general trend has been upwards from a total of 137 at 1st April, 1946, to 186 at 31st March, 1947. Two out of every three of the vacancies require tradesmen.

Farming and Seasonal Activities.—No heavy calls for farm labour were received during the year, vacancies reaching a peak of only 49 at 30th November, 1946, and falling off to 17 by 31st March, 1947. General farm hands, tractor-drivers, &c., were not in any great demand. Practically no calls were received for harvest workers, even at the height of the season. Both machine and blade shearers were, however, in keen demand. With the commencement of large-scale killing operations in December, 1946, the four freezing-works in the district experienced little difficulty in obtaining practically their full requirements of labour.

Clothing and Footwear Manufacture.—By far the most acute shortage of female labour in the district occurred in clothing-factories. Vacancies at 1st April, 1946, totalled 673; at 31st January, 1947, 950; and at 31st March, 1947, 886. Current demands for machinists and other skilled workers totalled 262; for unskilled women 429, and for juveniles 195. Vacancies in footwear-manufacture have remained at a fairly constant level during the twelve months, with a small rise from 169 to 177 over this period. All classes of workers, whether skilled, unskilled, or juvenile, are being sought by the industry.

Other Industries.—Many other industries in the district are seeking female labour. Woollen-mills required 146 workers (mainly unskilled) at 31st March, 1947, hospitals 142 (110 for domestic staff and nursing trainees and 32 in the mental hospital), retail shops, &c., 142, domestic service 121, printing and publishing 59, manufacture of leather goods 46, hotels and restaurants 46, &c. Likewise, further male labour was required by fertilizer-works (45 vacancies), brickworks (35 vacancies), and other industries. To a greater or lesser degree, practically all industries operating in the district, and particularly those in and around the urban area, are experiencing difficulties in obtaining their full requirements of labour.

Ashburton District

(Estimated male labour force, 5,900)

140. Throughout the year the main demands for male labour came from farming and seasonal industries such as harvesting, shearing, and work in the freezing-works. Only limited calls for male labour were received from secondary and servicing industries. Male vacancies were influenced by these seasonal activities, reaching 113 on 31st January, 1947, but easing off to 90 by 31st March, 1947. Winter employment for male seasonal