

PART III.—DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Whangarei District

Male employment in this district is largely centred on farming and other extractive industries, building and construction, transport, and shops and other servicing industries. There is a rather restricted range of manufacturing industries. The employment position is good. There were 205 notified vacancies, male and female, unsatisfied at 31st March, 1948, as compared with 76 at 31st March, 1947.

There is evidence of an increase in the numbers of Maoris employed in more permanent occupations of a skilled or semi-skilled nature in urban areas, and more could obtain such employment if accommodation were available. Although local industry has shown some tendency to expand, greater development and a wider variety of industries are desirable throughout this district. It is one of the districts where reserves of labour are still available for new industries.

During the year the Waro Coal-mine worked out and was closed in September, 1947, but employees numbering 60 were re-engaged within a few weeks by the State-owned Kamo Mine.

Male notified vacancies at 31st March, 1948, were 139, including 10 for dairy-farming, 15 for building and construction, 65 for rail transport, and 22 for the Post and Telegraph Department. Female notified vacancies were 66, of which 31 (15 nurses) were required for hospitals. Notified vacancies at 31st March, 1947, were 38 males and 38 females.

Auckland District

The shortage of labour in this district has remained particularly acute over the past twelve months. Vacancies for male employees notified to the Department have risen from 2,584 at 31st March, 1947, to 2,625 at 31st March, 1948. The increased demand has been for juvenile workers, the number of notified vacancies for males and females having risen from 751 at 31st March, 1947, to 898 at 31st March, 1948. Vacancies for skilled male workers have fallen by 54 to 664 at 31st March, 1948.

The number of female vacancies, 2,419, is 515 fewer than at 31st March, 1947.

The position in some of the more important industries is briefly reviewed below:—

Engineering and Metal-working Group.—This group has been very active over the past twelve months, though output has been somewhat restricted by shortages. Notified male vacancies have fallen from 862 at the end of March, 1947, to 720 at March, 1948. Vacancies at the Railways Workshops at Otahuhu totalled 290, including 198 skilled, 24 semi-skilled, and 68 unskilled. The total of vacancies at 31st March, 1947, was 371.

Building and Construction.—There has been considerable activity during the year in both State and private building. Notified vacancies total only 61, but it is believed that many more tradesmen could be absorbed.

Freezing-works.—It was not possible to meet peak demands for labour in full, but the three works in the district were nevertheless able to cope satisfactorily with all stock brought in.

Fertilizer-works, Tanneries, &c.—These industries have been difficult to man owing to the uncongenial nature of the work, and a high turnover rate has offset recruitment. Although 122 men were placed in the fertilizer and by-product works by this Department, vacancies rose from 82 at 1st April, 1947, to 131 at 31st March, 1948.

Brickworks.—A production bonus instituted by one unit in this district has stabilized the labour position and substantially increased the output of bricks. Vacancies dropped from 60 at 1st April, 1947, to 19 at 31st March, 1948, primarily due to the reduction of turnover.

Clothing and Footwear Manufacturing.—Both these industries are still very short of experienced staff. Female notified vacancies in the clothing industry fell during the year from 1,387 to 796. Vacancies for 156 females existed in footwear-factories at the end of the year, compared with 200 at the beginning of the year.

Other Industries.—While the industries mentioned above show particular shortages, almost all manufacturing industries in the Auckland urban area have again been affected by labour shortages. The staffing of hospitals has been difficult; 610 female vacancies were notified at 31st March, 1948, including 61 in mental hospitals and 186 nurses for general hospitals. Considerable shortages for male workers are shown by the Post and Telegraph and Railways Departments.