

The efforts of the Department to build up the coal-mining labour force have to some extent been nullified by the poor and limited accommodation for single men in mining townships. It is hoped that the erection of hostels at Denniston and Granity will help materially. A temporary hostel opened at Granity on 24th March, 1948, has only a limited capacity, but this will be increased by the building of hutments. There were 19 notified vacancies at 31st March, 1948, as compared with 22 at 31st March, 1947.

Although every effort was made to provide labour for bush sawmilling, vacancies (all for skilled men) were 20 at 31st March, 1948. Several homes for mill workers are being erected under the sawmill accommodation improvement scheme in order to attract experienced workers back to the industry.

The total male notified vacancies for the district at 31st March, 1948, was 90 (72 at 31st March, 1947). In addition to those mentioned above, there were vacancies in the railways. Female vacancies were 26 at 31st March, 1947, and 25 at 31st March, 1948. Of these, 11 were in hospitals, 9 of them being for nurses.

Greymouth District

With the bulk of the male labour force in the district engaged in the sawmilling and coal-mining industries, the chief demand is for men of a reasonably high standard of physical fitness.

The sawmilling industry employs some 870 men, and notified vacancies totalled 26 at 31st March, 1948. Part of the demand has been met by immigrant labour, but insufficient accommodation close to the mills is having a detrimental effect in filling vacancies. As in the case of Westport, this should be alleviated by the erection of houses under the sawmill accommodation improvement scheme.

In the coal-mining industry, employing nearly 1,600 men, immigrant labour has been used to fill vacancies for inexperienced men, particularly in the Reefton area, where the erection of a hostel has assisted with the accommodation problem. At 31st March, 1948, vacancies totalled 27, chiefly for experienced men. With further development of the Reefton coalfields the demand, particularly for unskilled labour, will increase.

Total male notified vacancies for the district at 31st March, 1948, were 191, as compared with 135 at 31st March, 1947. Apart from mining and milling, the principal demand for labour is from the Railways Department.

Female notified vacancies at 31st March, 1948, were 93, as compared with 81 at 31st March, 1947. Vacancies were chiefly in hotels and catering (21) and hospitals (56, including 23 for mental hospitals and 27 nurses for general hospitals).

Christchurch District

Christchurch is the centre both of a large and important farming area and of a wide range of secondary and tertiary industries. Almost all branches of manufacture are represented, including town sawmilling, furniture-making, flour-milling, rubber-ware industry, manufacture of vehicles, engineering, printing, tanneries, while women workers find employment in woollen and knitting mills, clothing-factories, footwear-manufacture, and a great diversity of other industries.

Male notified vacancies rose during the year from 1,060 at 31st March, 1947, to 1,534 at 31st March, 1948. The former included 343 skilled and 416 unskilled vacancies, and the latter 546 skilled and 528 unskilled. Notified female vacancies altered little, being 2,215 at 31st March, 1947, and 2,290 at 31st March, 1948; but the increasing shortage of skilled labour in relation to demand has been even more pronounced. Whereas the 1947 figure included 377 skilled vacancies and 981 unskilled, the 1948 figure included 1,038 skilled and 490 unskilled.