

(6) The work of the Industrial Welfare Division has again been carried on in the face of considerable difficulty from shortages of materials. Inspectors are intent upon the improvement of the physical environment of workers. About 10 per cent. of the strikes recorded during the year were concerned with what may be called welfare—with such things as dining facilities, excessive heat, amenities on board ship, &c. But it scarcely needs this evidence to assert that the creation of a satisfactory working environment is a *sine qua non* of industrial peace. This, and that part of the duties of the inspectorate concerned with advising employers and workers on matters relating to industrial law and to the enforcement of that law, comprise the most important parts of the activities of the Division. Enforcement action has been carried on normally, as will be seen from examination of Tables 17–23.

(7) At the Thirtieth Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 1947) a convention concerning labour inspection in industry and commerce was adopted. The convention sets out in comprehensive detail the requirements of a labour inspectorate. It is gratifying to note that a preliminary examination of the convention shows it to contain no requirement that is not already observed in New Zealand, the Department's inspectorate thus conforming to the highest standards that can be agreed on internationally.

PART II.—DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES

SECTION I.—EMPLOYMENT

(a) *Placements*

(1) During the twelve months ended 31st March, 1948, a total of 20,974 men and women were placed in vacant positions by the district offices of the Department. There were 16,554 men and 4,420 women included in this total of 20,974 placements. Of the 16,554 males placed during the year, 3,948 were ex-servicemen, 282 were regarded as being semi-employable, while 2,574 were under the age of twenty-one and 203 were over sixty years of age. The successful placement in employment of semi-employables and persons over sixty years of age presents one of the most difficult tasks of the employment service, and the placement during the year of 485 persons in these categories is gratifying. The number of persons enrolled with the Department who remained unplaced at 31st March, 1948, was only 31, being less than half the number who remained unplaced at 31st March, 1947.

(2) The number of placements of males throughout the Dominion for the year represented 31 per 1,000 labour force. The placements per 1,000 labour force ranged from 10 in Hamilton and Masterton to 90 in Gisborne. The districts with a male placement rate above 50 per 1,000 were Gisborne, Ashburton, Nelson, Napier, and Oamaru in that order. These five districts also showed the highest placement rates last year.

(3) Of the 16,554 placements of males, 3,473 were in primary industries, 8,618 in secondary industries, and the remainder, 4,463, in tertiary industries. The industries in which the largest numbers of men were placed during the year were building and construction (2,545), farming (2,289), wholesale and retail trade (1,730), engineering (1,632), and meat freezing and processing (1,175). Figures for all industries are shown in Table IV of the Appendix.

(4) In industries such as building and construction, meat freezing and processing, and dairy-products manufacturing, employment is less secure than in most other industries. This is, of course, particularly true of freezing-works and dairy factories, which require considerable numbers of workers for a part of the year only and frequently require them in localities with insufficient alternative employment opportunities. In an economy where industries of this type occupy an important position, the adequate functioning of an employment service is a matter of prime importance.