

continues though easing gradually, higher standards of welfare for the worker are being set though shortages are in some cases thwarting their immediate full achievement. There is a general realization that standards of living can be raised only by increasing the productivity of the economy as a whole. In achieving this goal the maintenance of orderly and just measures in the resolution of industrial conflicts together with the provision of healthy and safe conditions of work and the building of high morale are of importance.

PART II—DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1—EMPLOYMENT

(a) *Placements*

(1) The necessity for a placement service has been dictated by different circumstances during the last couple of decades. During the early 1930's there was a large body of unemployed in New Zealand, and the placement service fulfilled the primary function of finding employment for many of these displaced workers. During the post-war period the changed economy of the country has been characterized by an acute shortage of labour. This has required every effort being directed to reducing to a minimum the time-lag caused by workers moving from one job to another and to effecting the best utilization of available labour. The Department's placement service has been particularly successful in locating suitable employment for workers promptly after enrolment, and its facilities are available to all job-seekers—i.e., to those already unemployed and to those already engaged who seek more suitable employment.

(2) During the year ended 31st March, 1949, no less than 20,995 job-seekers of both types were found employment by the Department. These placements comprised 14,686 men and 6,309 women. In very few cases was the delay between enrolment and actual placement in employment longer than a day or so. The speed with which placement of workers is carried out can be gauged from the fact that, while there were 20,995 placements effected during the year, there remained only 38 persons currently enrolled for employment at 31st March, 1949. To industry this efficiency means a minimum loss in production, and to the worker it means a minimum loss in earnings.

(3) Lord Beveridge, in his *Full Employment in a Free Society*, page 128, has suggested that, even under full employment, minimum seasonal and frictional unemployment can be expected to affect as much as 3 per cent. of the labour force at any given point of time. This would mean a permanent loss of 3 per cent. of the country's labour force or, in other words, an equivalent decrease in the production of industry and in the aggregate of workers' incomes. Such a proportion of the labour force would, in New Zealand, amount to over 20,000 workers. Of the total of workers affected by seasonal and frictional changes in employment (whether or not Lord Beveridge's estimate is accepted) only 38 were registered as unemployed on 31st March, a figure which reflects the success of the Department in its placement activities.

(4) The 14,686 placements of men during the year included those of 313 who were semi-employable or who were over sixty years of age. The finding of employment for these semi-employables and persons over sixty presents one of the most difficult problems of the placement service. The placement of 313 of these workers during the year by the Department has been a most worth-while aspect of its activities. Not only have they been removed as a charge on the Social Security Fund, but, in spite of their handicaps, each individual worker included has been given new confidence in his capability for performing useful work for industry and for the community.

(5) During the last year, as in the past years, the Department has also made every effort to cope with the seasonal demands of fruit, hop, and tobacco growers, as well as meat freezing, dairy factories, and other seasonal industries. Table IV of the Appendix shows the industries in which placements were made during the year, and shows the measure of success attained in satisfying the labour needs of these seasonal industries.