

Seasonal Industries.— In the peak month of January, 1949, seasonal workers numbered 1,041 including 625 in freezing-works and 406 in wool-stores.

Very few calls were made for labour for wool-stores, and these were easily satisfied. Before the commencement of the killing season it was reported that difficulty might be experienced in securing sufficient experienced chain slaughtermen for freezing-works, but no great difficulty was experienced by seasonal undertakings in obtaining sufficient labour.

Blenheim District

Labour requirements, especially seasonal demands, were more readily satisfied than in previous years. The Picton freezing-works, for the first time in many years, was fully staffed at the commencement of the season. Killing ceased for nearly four weeks at the end of January due to a breakdown of machinery at the works, and 83 men were left without employment. Of these men, 60 were placed by the Department and the remainder secured other temporary employment.

The demand for seasonal workers for orchards was smaller than usual owing to a light fruit crop.

Notified vacancies for males at the 31st March, 1949, totalled 83, and 46 for females as compared with 115 and 68 respectively at the 31st March, 1948.

Nelson District

There is an annual influx of workers into this district to handle the large volume of seasonal work offering in orchards, tobacco and hop growing, other fruit and vegetable growing, and in canning-factories. The Department recruits seasonal workers from all districts, organizes travelling parties to Nelson, and arranges accommodation. The Department placed 4,160 workers (1,141 males and 3,019 females) during the year. In the previous year the number was 1,872 (769 males and 1,103 females). The facilities offered by the Department with its district offices throughout the Dominion are being increasingly relied upon by employers and workers.

If the proposal to establish a factory manufacturing prefabricated houses is proceeded with, it will provide additional employment opportunities.

Notified vacancies for males fell from 218 at the 31st March, 1948, to 153 at the 31st March, 1949. Female vacancies at the 31st March, 1949, were 130, as compared with 152 twelve months earlier.

Westport District

Notified vacancies for both males and females have remained fairly constant over the past year. At the 31st March, 1949, vacancies for males numbered 83, and for females 30. The figure twelve months earlier was 90 and 25 respectively.

The majority of new settlers arriving in the district have been allocated to the coal-mining industry. These settlers have adjusted themselves well to New Zealand conditions and are a useful addition to the labour force.

The comparatively few vacancies in industry (apart from coal-mining and bush sawmilling) has made placement of semi-fit and older male workers difficult. Nevertheless, the number of disengaged males did not rise above 2 except in July, when it stood at 4; the maximum number of unemployed at any time in the previous year was 7.

Greymouth District

Between April and October, 1948, the numbers engaged in bush sawmilling rose from 877 to 924, and last October the largest cargo of timber in twelve years was shipped from Greymouth for Australian markets. The labour position in the coal-mining industry also improved.