

*Palmerston North (Manawatu).*—Here, again, the farm labour shortage which was experienced was felt mainly in the dairy branch of the industry, and the direction of "Necal" personnel has much improved the position. A stabilization of the dairy-farm labour force in this district is reported. This is attributed to the accessibility of the bulk of the district and to recent wage increases. Some change over from dairy-farming to sheep-farming has been reported, but this has been checked to a degree by the inflow of "Necal" personnel. The dairying branch of the industry has also suffered from the shortage of fertilizer. In the sheep-farming branch the farm labour position was never so difficult as in the case of dairy-farming, and the shortage which was experienced was corrected by the direction of "Necal" personnel. Some expansion of sheep-farming activity in the Manawatu district is expected. No problem is presented by either mixed farming or agricultural farming.

*Masterton (Wairarapa).*—In the Wairarapa district, as a result of the direction of "Necal" personnel, the farm labour position is reported as being easier than it has been for several seasons. Primary Production Councils have played a material part in achieving this good result. Special mention is made of the arrears of maintenance work, which will present a considerable problem, and also of the valuable contribution of the members of the Women's Land Service in this district.

*Wellington and Lower Hutt.*—In neither of the small districts covered by these two offices is farming activity of any consequence. Such farm labour problem as has existed has been correspondingly minute.

*Blenheim (Marlborough).*—Such dairy-farming as is carried on in this district is mainly pursued on a single-unit basis and hence little labour turnover has been experienced. Farm labour shortage is not a great problem. In the sheep-farming branch of the industry a very considerable labour turnover has been experienced and at times there has been a real shortage. The direction of "Necal" personnel has done much to improve the position. Agricultural farming has presented little difficulty, apart from its seasonal aspect. Small fruit, shearing, and harvesting have been the major seasonal difficulties in Marlborough. On the whole, the farm labour position in the Marlborough district is reported as satisfactory, with the normal drift to the towns arrested.

*Nelson.*—Little turnover of farm labour in this district is reported and the position is considered by both the District Man-power Officer and the Primary Production Council to be satisfactory. Seasonal farm labour shortage in the tobacco, hops, and fruit branches is considerable, and there is an annual immigration of labour for this purpose.

*Westport (Northern West Coast).*—In this district, where dairy-farming is practically the only branch of the industry, no marked labour shortage has been reported for some time.

*Greymouth (Southern West Coast).*—In dairy-farming a substantially similar position to that obtaining in the case of Westport is reported.

*Christchurch (Canterbury).*—In the dairy-farming branch of the industry the man-power position is regarded as being more satisfactory than for some years. In sheep-farming, also, the position is regarded as highly satisfactory. In mixed farming and agriculture, largely as a result of the valuable assistance of Primary Production Councils, there has been a satisfactory solution of the shortage of shearers, enabling the available labour force of trained men to handle the clip.

*Ashburton.*—In neither dairy nor sheep farming is there any important farm labour problem. Some shortage of labour is experienced in mixed farming, particularly in cropping, and here the position has been assisted materially by the use of Service personnel. Harvesting has always presented difficulties in the Ashburton district. The organized zoning of sheds for shearing has assisted in overcoming the shortage of shearers.

*Timaru (South Canterbury).*—Dairy-farming has presented little difficulty in this district, but a considerable shortage of experienced shepherds and other sheep-farm workers is known to exist. Again the shortage of trained shearers has been met by zoning. In mixed farming a demand for all types of workers, but particularly tractor-drivers and teamsters, is chronic. A large number of "Necal" men was allotted to farmers in this district. The Timaru district is a big absorber of seasonal farm labour and has been much assisted by the Army Harvesting Scheme. A labour problem in threshing-mills is reported.

*Dunedin (Otago).*—The overall farm labour position in this district is reported as satisfactory. It has been much assisted by the direction of "Necal" men. Dairy-farming presents no difficulties, but there is some shortage of high-country shepherds. Harvesting activity, as in the case of other districts, was dealt with satisfactorily with the aid of Service personnel. The zoning of shearing activities in co-operation with Primary Production Councils enabled a satisfactory solution of the always difficult shearing problem. Lack of suitable accommodation is quoted as the main difficulty of farming in this district.

*Invercargill.*—The general farm labour position is reported as satisfactory despite the recent comb-out of Category "A" men. This position is attributed to the direction of "Necal" personnel. Lack of suitable accommodation, particularly for married couples, is the main difficulty of the dairy-farming industry. Harvesting has been met during the last season by the aid of Service personnel, while in the case of the shearing season little difficulty was experienced.

**367.** The reports of District Man-power Officers justify the appraisal of the farm labour position which has already been made. Conclusions invited from the data provided are—

- (a) In both sheep and dairy farming in the main farming districts there is considerable scope for the progressive expansion of the labour force.
- (b) The dairy-farming branch of the industry is most affected by farm labour shortage, with the Hawke's Bay and South Canterbury districts presenting an especially difficult seasonal farm labour problem in agricultural activity.
- (c) Lack of suitable accommodation, inaccessibility and therefore absence of social amenities, seasonal nature of much of the work, and relatively low wages account for the reluctance of workers to engage in this activity.
- (d) The pre-war trend of the population from farming to urban industry has been temporarily arrested during the war years. (NOTE.—Some 8,900 male workers were held under direction in the farming industry as at 31st March, 1945.) This drift must, however, be expected to reassert itself unless employment in the industry is made more attractive, particularly in regard to the provision of suitable housing.