

were set up to maintain a close watch on production and to set production targets for critical lines. With such targets established it became possible for District Man-power Officers, assisted by Utilization Committees, to take much more drastic steps to transfer labour into factories prepared to concentrate on these critical lines.

241. As at 31st March, 1945, some 4,000 women were working under man-power direction in the clothing-manufacturing industry. At this point the number employed in clothing-factories was some 15,000, with a further 1,700 employed in allied types of factory (gloves, canvas goods, &c.).

242. A notable feature of the industry has been the growing tendency, particularly in the war years, to decentralize. In 1939, of the 585 factories, 515 were located in the four main centres and 70 in secondary towns. In 1945, of the 615 factories then operating, 524 were situated in the four main centres, constituting an increase of 9, or 1·7 per cent., whereas 91 were operating in secondary towns, representing an increase of 21, or 30 per cent. This tendency towards decentralization was due to the greater availability of female labour in secondary towns. The Department was largely responsible for the move to decentralize by carrying out surveys of available female labour in secondary towns and advising manufacturers on their prospects of staffing new factories in such localities.

243. Notified vacancies in the industry as at 31st March, 1946, were for 93 males and 3,489 females. This latter figure represented more than one-third of the total notified female vacancies for all industries, and it is obvious from the vacancy figures that the shortage of female labour in the industry is extreme. The vacancies naturally increased considerably as women left the industry following the revocation of the declaration of essentiality on 31st January, 1946, which, at that date, applied to 302 clothing-manufacturing concerns. In order to overcome the female labour shortage a number of employers have in recent months engaged men for training as machinists, and from early reports are well satisfied with the progress being made. It seems likely that the swing towards the use of male labour in this field will become more pronounced in the future.

244. Woollen-mills and Allied.—The production of woollen, hosiery, and allied factories has remained of the utmost importance throughout the war years by reason of the military contracts undertaken and of the dependence of the clothing industry upon the output of the woollen-milling industry. Consequently, the Department has retained this industry on a first priority throughout and has exerted every effort to maintain its labour force.

245. A recent survey carried out by the Department showed that in 1939 there were 14 woollen-mill units in the industry employing 1,245 males and 1,922 females, while in October, 1945, the number of units was unchanged, but male employees had increased to 1,618 and females to 2,009.

246. Unfortunately, mill managements were not prepared to co-operate with the Department to the extent of appointing representatives to a national Man-power Utilization Council for the industry, or to local Man-power Utilization Committees. The absence of this co-operation made the realignment of labour rather more difficult than in the clothing industry, where the assistance of employers on the Committees contributed very materially towards the remarkable build-up in staff that was achieved in that industry. Nor did the woollen-mills make an effort comparable with that of clothing-factories to secure staff independently of the Department's efforts. During 1943, 1944, and first quarter of 1945 the industry was assisted by the issue of over 1,000 effective directions, the bulk of which were issued to female workers.

247. Recorded vacancies in woollen and knitting mills as at 31st March, 1946, were :—

Males	69
Females	550