

institutions in other districts had been allocated accordingly. In addition, a reserve pool of 23 volunteers was created from which to fill subsequent vacancies. It is worthy of mention that an address by officers of this Department and the Mental Hospitals Department to approximately 100 girls, whose employment on the manufacture of munitions at Lower Hutt was terminating, yielded 21 volunteers.

**260.** As at 31st March, 1946, vacancies in mental hospitals, as shown by the Mental Hospitals Department, were fairly well distributed between the various institutions throughout the Dominion, and totalled 72 for males and 215 for females.

**261.** As at 31st March, 1945, approximately 2,800 women were held under direction in general and mental hospital employment, comprising mainly wardsmasids, kitchen and laundry staff, and mental nurses.

### (ix) Seasonal Industries

**262.** Seasonal industries (including freezing-works, dairy factories, wool-stores, food-processing factories, haymaking, harvesting, shearing, and fruit-picking), being so closely related to primary production, hold a position of great importance in the Dominion's economy. During the war years they acquired added importance owing to the dependence of Great Britain and Allied Forces in the Pacific area on foodstuffs from this country. Fluctuations in the level of employment in these industries are very marked, and it is estimated that they require up to 30,000 workers in the summer and early autumn, the actual number required varying with the nature of the season. Prior to the war the labour needs of these seasonal industries were largely met by persons who undertook this type of work in season, and relied in the off-season on such employment as could be found. Prior to the war, therefore, seasonal labour requirements were met at the cost of a chronic between-season unemployment peak and through the continuing existence of a large pool of men whose employment prospects even during the season remained unstable and (in the case of unskilled or inexperienced labour) insecure. During the first two years of war great changes occurred in this pool of labour. Large numbers entered the Armed Forces, and with the progressive general shortage of labour many were attracted by vacancies which occurred in other industries and were loath to leave such more permanent employment when seasonal labour was in demand.

**263.** New means of providing seasonal labour had to be devised. The chief measures taken were as follows :—

- (a) The temporary release of men from military camps.
- (b) The withholding of experienced men from military service on appeal subject to their continued availability for seasonal work.
- (c) The Army and Air Force harvesting scheme in the 1943–44 and 1944–45 seasons (see subsection (ii) above relating to farming).
- (d) The direction of labour from other industries during the season.
- (e) The direction of male University and training-college students and school-teachers during the long vacation in the 1942–43, 1943–44, and 1944–45 seasons, and of female University and training-college students and school teachers in the 1943–44 and 1944–45 seasons.
- (f) The use of schoolboys, schoolgirls, and other voluntary workers for such work as vegetable growing, fruit and hop picking, &c.
- (g) The use of part-time workers in food-processing factories.

**264.** These measures carried the seasonal industries safely through the war period. The general shortage of labour made the finding of winter employment for seasonal workers relatively easy, and between-season unemployment virtually disappeared. The two main seasonal industries other than harvesting are dealt with in greater detail hereunder :—

**265. Butter and Cheese Manufacture.**—Although this industry is carried on in all districts, the chief centres of activity are Taranaki, Waikato, Manawatu, and Southland.