

266. The Department's task of providing the full complement of labour for dairy factories during the war years was rendered difficult by the following factors:—

- (a) The heavy and unattractive nature of the work.
- (b) The remote location of many factories.
- (c) A lack of accommodation and amenities for married men, and, in some cases, for single men.

267. The number of men engaged in the industry in the off-season—i.e., the winter months—is in the vicinity of 2,800, while in the flush of the season, during the summer months, a labour force of over 4,200 is required.

268. Prior to the commencement of the 1941–42 season it was realized that some difficulty would be experienced in building up the labour force to the peak figure. At that time man-power controls had not been introduced, and Great Britain was asking for increased cheese-production, necessitating a diversion of a portion of the industry from butter to cheese making. In order to prepare for the expected labour shortage the Cheese Industry (Registration of Employment) Order 1941 was gazetted in June, 1941. This Order required the registration of cheese-factories and workers engaged in or having had previous experience in cheese-factories. The registration of workers enabled Placement Officers to set up registers of experienced cheese-factory hands. By 30th September, 1941, 1,143 persons who had had previous cheese-factory experience but were not then employed in the industry had registered. Of this number, all except 272 indicated their willingness to return to the industry. This fine response and the efforts of Placement Officers to make up labour deficiencies with voluntary unskilled labour, carried the industry safely through the 1941–42 season, and an increase in cheese-production of 29·7 per cent. was achieved.

269. In the 1942–43 season, by which time man-power controls were in force, Great Britain's requirements necessitated reversion to butter-production. An examination of the position indicated that a labour shortage was likely, particularly in the Taranaki district. The registers of cheese-factory workers taken over by District Man-power Officers from Placement Officers proved helpful and enabled District Man-power Officers to ensure, by means of direction where necessary, that experienced cheese-factory workers returned to the industry for the season. The approval of War Cabinet was obtained for the withdrawal from the Forces of sufficient men volunteering for dairy-factory employment to meet deficiencies where labour could not be obtained from other sources. Under this scheme District Man-power Officers and Armed Forces Appeal Boards made recommendations for the release of 479 men from 1st June, 1942, to 22nd March, 1943. During the course of the season a National Man-power Utilization Council was set up to assist the Department in examining the man-power problems confronting the industry and in devising ways and means of overcoming them. By this time, also, considerable numbers of experienced men in the industry were being withheld from military service on appeal. In cases where employers having a sufficiency of labour did not lodge appeals, this action was taken by the Department and the men were then directed to other factories where shortages existed. As at 31st March, 1943, 921 Grade I men were held on appeal.

270. The requirements of the 1943–44 season were met by means similar to those adopted in the previous season. During the period 1st April, 1943, to 31st March, 1944, District Man-power Officers and Armed Forces Appeal Boards effected the release of 439 men from the Forces for employment in dairy factories, and as at 31st March, 1944, 891 Grade I men were held on appeal. A proportion of university and training-college students and school-teachers was directed to employment in dairy factories during the long vacation, the number placed from December, 1943, to March, 1944, being 97.

271. Before the commencement of the 1944–45 season the decision was made to return the Third (Pacific) Division to New Zealand and to place volunteers for essential work in specified industries, including the butter and cheese manufacturing industries. By 30th November, 1944, 473 men from the Third Division were employed