

the Department worked in close co-operation with the Munitions Controller, Ship Building Controller, Factory Controller, the Ship Building and Repairs Committee, and the three arms of the Services. The Department also received valuable assistance from the National Man-power Utilization Council for the industry which was established at the beginning of 1942 and from the numerous local Utilization Committees which were set up a few months later.

292. Units of the industry engaged on munitions and other work of similar priority were included in the first group of undertakings declared essential in January, 1942, and the coverage was extended steadily as less-essential production disappeared, until practically the entire industry was covered.

293. In March, 1942, the Metal Trades' Workers' Registration Order 1942 was gazetted, requiring males from eighteen to seventy years inclusive employed or having had experience in various occupations in the engineering industry to register with District Man-power Officers, and by the end of April, 1942, 20,109 such workers had registered. An examination of the registrations showed that 2,788 registrants were not employed at their trades, although of these, 876 were over sixty-one years of age. At the same time a survey of 321 engineering concerns engaged on munitions and allied work and employing 8,467 workers revealed 975 vacancies, including 665 for skilled workers and 169 for semi-skilled workers. The registration of tradesmen enabled the Department to direct back to the industry skilled tradesmen who had previously left it and to transfer workers within the industry, by means of direction, from the less-essential to the more-essential classes of work. Despite these measures, the demand for skilled labour continued to exceed the supply, and by the middle of June, 1942, the Department was facilitating the release to the industry of tradesmen who had previously entered the Forces.

294. By July, 1942, Auckland shipyards were called upon to build Fairmile patrol boats, in addition to the minesweeper-building programme which had been in progress for some time. To enable the yards to undertake this additional work 100 tradesmen skilled in the art of boat-building were required. The Department combed all districts throughout the Dominion to find this labour, and suitable tradesmen were directed to Auckland as they were located. The Railways Department, the largest single employer of engineering tradesmen in the Dominion, from time to time up to this period, and, in fact, right throughout the war years, greatly assisted private enterprise by the loan periodically of considerable numbers of tradesmen for highly essential work.

295. By 1943 the industry generally, geared for the maximum effort, was working long hours, and at this stage unskilled as well as skilled and semi-skilled men were being withheld from military service. Where appeals were not lodged by employers that action was taken by the Department, and in appropriate cases the workers were transferred to more essential work, involving, in some cases, transfer to other districts. At 31st March, 1943, 2,915 Grade I men, other than employees of railways and tramways workshops, were held on appeal. In the period 1st June, 1942, to 22nd March, 1943, Armed Forces Appeal Boards made recommendations for the release from the Forces of 552 engineering and metal trade workers.

296. In February, 1943, the expansion of munitions production in the Wellington and Lower Hutt districts necessitated the provision of 345 additional female workers. As the shortage of female labour in all essential industries in this area was acute it was necessary for District Man-power Officers in other centres in both the North and South Islands to provide the labour by directing women from their districts. These women were accommodated in hostels built by the Housing Construction Department and managed on behalf of the National Service Department by the Y.W.C.A.

297. In the year ended 31st March, 1944, the industry continued to work at great pressure, the main emphasis again being placed on ship building and repair and munitions-production. During the period 1st April, 1943, to 31st March, 1944, man-power releases from the Forces to the industry totalled 1,245, and as a result at 31st March, 1944, 3,157 Grade I men (exclusive of railways and tramways workshops staffs) were held on