

(a) *Farming (preponderantly, though not entirely, Sheep-farming).*—Up to 31st December, 1945, a large number of vacancies on farms were notified, mainly for shepherds and fencers. (Notified vacancies at 30th September, 1945, 278; 15th December, 1945, 109; and 31st March, 1946, 30.) In a majority of cases only single or tent accommodation was available, and consequently such vacancies could not absorb married men. From December onwards, with the onset of severe drought conditions and consequent uncertainty on the part of the farming community as to the future (and later on grass and scrub fires), and with the return of considerable numbers of men from the Armed Forces, a marked drop in vacancies occurred. Although the breaking of the drought in March slightly eased the position, the rain came too late to be of any real benefit to pastures this season, and consequently the employment prospects open to farm hands during the coming winter period appear to be limited.

(b) *Harvesting and Shearing.*—Few calls for labour were received, and farmers evidently had little difficulty in handling both these activities.

(c) *Freezing-works.*—With Tokomaru Bay works resuming about the end of October, Gisborne Refrigerating Co. about the middle of November, and the Wairoa works about the beginning of December, no difficulties were experienced in meeting the demands of this industry for labour. While seasonal activities remained at a high level, all fully-fit men, including all available unskilled men, were readily placed in employment. Peak employment figures were reached in December, and, due to the abnormal drought season and the consequent abnormally heavy killings of stock, the seasonal workers engaged in this industry were fully maintained in employment until the drought broke early in March. The immediate effect was the withholding of a small balance of stock and terminations of employment in freezing-works commenced about the middle of March. It has been estimated that by the time activities cease for the season approximately 175 or more freezing-workers will be looking to this Service for assistance in obtaining employment.

(d) *Wool-stores.*—In engaging labour the wool-stores gave a measure of preference to ex-servicemen who desired this work during the seasonal period from late October until March. Full staffs were engaged as soon as required.

(e) *Building Industry.*—Vacancies offering (almost entirely for tradesmen) have remained fairly steady at about 30, despite reported shortages of all building materials (timber, cement, roofing, fittings, &c.).

(f) *Returned Servicemen.*—Although in the initial stages of the year and during the seasonal peak few difficulties were experienced in suitably placing ex-servicemen, it became increasingly apparent that difficulties would arise as the season tapered off, particularly in locating suitable employment for fit unskilled men and semi-fit men. With little or no alternative local work of any permanency offering in this district, difficulties had already begun to show in March in the placement of unskilled ex-servicemen, and with further registrations of men after completion of their discharge leave, the position was expected to become increasingly difficult.

### Napier-Hastings District

459. In the case of male labour the number of notified vacancies exceeded on an average the numbers of those disengaged and seeking employment through this Service by approximately 6 to 1 for the period, and employment has been readily available. This district, however, particularly in the Hastings area, is essentially a primary-producing one requiring a large pool of seasonal workers to cope with the work offering in freezing-works, wool-stores, orchards, harvesting, market gardening, &c. While there is therefore abundant work offering during the season, only limited employment prospects offer during the off-seasonal period from approximately May to October inclusive.

460. In the case of female labour with no more than 5 registered at any one stage as disengaged (1 at 31st March, 1946), it has usually been possible to effect immediate placement of any persons registering for employment. While a definite shortage of female labour has been in evidence, it has been possible to keep reasonably abreast with the replacement needs of most industries.

(a) *Freezing-works.*—Upon the resumption of large-scale killing activities in this industry in November the demand for labour was adequately met, although it was necessary to issue a limited number of directions in order to fully staff the works. Due to the abnormally long dry spell of weather and the consequent serious shortage of feed, exceptionally large numbers of stock were received for killing, and, with a full staff available, the works were able to reach peak seasonal killings at a much earlier date than usual. With the breaking of the drought, however, late in March, nearly 350 men were released from this industry within a month. Nevertheless, no appreciable increase resulted in the numbers enrolled for employment owing to the number of other vacancies then existing in the district, particularly the need for labour on orchards.

(b) *Farming Industry.*—Only limited demands for labour have been forthcoming from the farming industry during the period. This was largely due, no doubt, to the long period of drought conditions. Insufficient accommodation for married persons limited the ability of the Department to fill vacancies offering. Surprisingly small demands were made for harvesting labour, even allowing for the poor yield of crops.