

(ii) Disengaged Persons

504. As from 30th September, 1945, a return of disengaged persons has been furnished by District Officers at the end of each half month. This return shows the number of disengaged males and females who are enrolled at the District Employment Offices for employment at the date of the return. The figures are classified to show for each industry the split-up of disengaged persons according to age, fitness, duration of unemployment, whether in receipt of unemployment benefit, and whether a returned serviceman or otherwise. Tables 42 and 43 of the Appendix sets out the position regarding disengaged persons up to 31st March, 1946.

(iii) Placements

505. A natural consequence of the recording of numbers of persons disengaged and seeking work and the numbers of notified vacancies in industry was the recording of the number of placements made by the Department. Tables 44 and 45 of the Appendix are summaries of the information available from the 1st January to the 31st March, 1946.

(iv) Overall Position

506. Between the end of September, 1945, and the 31st March, 1946, the number of men enrolled for employment did not fluctuate by more than 258. The average number enrolled was 478. The civilian male working population is estimated to have averaged some 480,000 over the period, giving an average rate of unemployment of 0.1 per cent. Notwithstanding the demobilization of 74,000 men since VJ Day, the relaxation of man-power control affecting 218,000 workers and the change-over in industry to meet peacetime needs only 402 males were disengaged as at 31st March, 1946. The impact of demobilization was cushioned by many deferred retirements from industry, by a heavy wastage of female labour, and by the upward surge of seasonal activity, while the return of troops from distant war zones spread demobilization over a period of many months' duration. Of the 478 enrolled, on an average only 318 men were seeking work for more than two weeks, and an average of 325, or 68 per cent. of the total, were semi-fit or sixty years of age and over. The average number of women enrolled during the period was only 26.

507. The most significant feature in regard to vacancies in industry was the extraordinarily rapid increase in female vacancies after VJ Day, following a long period of stability in which the number of vacancies remained within approximately 1,000 of the wartime peak of 4,792 in March, 1945. By 31st March, 1946, the number of female vacancies reached 9,929, as compared with 4,314 at 31st July, 1945, just prior to the end of hostilities. Most of these vacancies were concentrated in a few industrial groups. Clothing and other textile industries notified 3,950, or 40 per cent. of the total; woollen and knitting mills, 550 (6 per cent.); footwear-manufacture, 646 (7 per cent.); health and social welfare, 1,245 (13 per cent.); and hotels and restaurants, 743 (8 per cent.). Vacancies for males had not shown the same marked increase since VJ Day and were more widely distributed over the industrial field, although 1,816 (26 per cent.) were in building and construction, 816 (11 per cent.) in railways, and 817 (11 per cent.) in engineering. Increases in vacancies had occurred mainly in the four main industrial centres. At the end of the war Auckland, Wellington (including Lower Hutt), Christchurch, and Dunedin notified 62 per cent. of the male vacancies and 82 per cent. of female vacancies. By the end of March, 1945, these proportions had increased to 73 per cent. for males and 87 per cent. for females.

508. With employment so readily available it followed that the number of placements effected by Man-power Officers would not be very large. Moreover, as the margin of absorptive capacity was much greater in respect of females, only 1,535 women were placed in industry by Man-power Officers in the first quarter of 1946, as compared