

REPORT

PART I—THE INDUSTRIAL POSITION OVER THE TWELVE MONTHS

SECTION I—EMPLOYMENT LEVELS AND TRENDS

(1) Although there has been some uncertainty at times in overseas employment trends during the twelve months under review, overseas rises in unemployment levels have not been reflected in New Zealand. On the contrary, despite slowly but steadily increasing immigration, together with the natural increase in the labour force, there has been an increase in the demand for labour.

(2) In the twelve months from October, 1948, to October, 1949, the labour force (inclusive of working proprietors and own-account workers) increased from 717,500 to 730,600. Most of the gain came from natural increase and immigration, but there has also been some evidence that there have been gains from such sources as rehabilitation-bursary holders, an increased number of persons remaining in industry in the upper age-groups, and the acceptance of employment by persons previously at leisure. The continuing spread of small factories to smaller centres would stimulate the last-mentioned tendency.

(3) Between October, 1948, and October, 1949, the estimated size and distribution of the labour force changed as follows :—

			October, 1948. (000's)	October, 1949. (000's)
(a) Primary industry .. ..	..	..	172·7	172·8
(b) Secondary industry (including building and construction) .. ..	..	..	221·6	228·6
(c) Transport and communication .. ..	..	..	70·7	72·5
(d) Distribution and finance .. ..	..	..	112·0	113·3
(e) Public administration and professional .. ..	..	..	89·9	92·2
(f) Domestic and personal services .. ..	..	..	42·5	42·6
			709·4	722·0
(g) Armed Forces .. ..	..	..	8·0	8·5
(h) Unemployment .. ..	..	..	0·1	0·1
Total .. ..	..	..	717·5	730·6

(4) Perhaps the most interesting feature in the above figures is the arresting of the previous downward trend in primary industries where the figures have been : October, 1946, 173·8 ; October, 1947, 173·0 ; October, 1948, 172·7 ; October, 1949, 172·8. In other respects the figures show a continuation of trends observable in the previous twelve months. Secondary industries (including building and construction) recorded the greatest expansion, 7,000 as compared with 3,600 in the preceding twelve months.

(5) Despite the expansion of the labour force over all industries by some 13,000 over the twelve months, the downward trend in vacancies referred to a year ago has been reversed. Vacancies recorded in half-yearly returns of employment information at annual points over the past four years have been :—

Date.			Male Surveyed Vacancies.	Female Surveyed Vacancies.	Total Surveyed Vacancies.
October, 1946 .. ..	..	..	14,745	14,060	28,805
October, 1947 .. ..	..	..	15,879	13,208	29,087
October, 1948 .. ..	..	..	14,719	11,919	26,638
October, 1949 .. ..	..	..	17,446	12,684	30,130