struction industry sometimes is not able to attract sufficient skilled workers during peak periods of demand. Short-term deficiences of skilled building trades workers are not readily alleviated through increased training activity because of the long period generally required to train skilled building trades workers. (In fact, training of apprentices may be reduced during a period of high demand to the extent that some apprentices prematurely terminate their training program because of the ease of obtaining work at the journeyman level.)

Because of the local nature of much of the construction industry, there may be shortages of skilled building trades workers reported in one region—while at the same time unemployment is higher than normal in another region. This, in combination with the ordinarily high level of frictional unemployment associated with the industry, means that shortages for building trades workers can exist even when unemployment rates for these workers are high relative to the national rates for all workers in the labor force.

Current employment data indicate growing pressures on the supply of trained construction manpower during the remainder of 1966. Employment in the construction industry in 1965 averaged 4.6 million, 2.9 percent above 1964. Conversely, unemployment for experienced workers in the industry during 1965 averaged 9.0 percent compared with 9.9 percent in 1964. The current employment rate in construction is the lowest (for comparable months) since Korea. In March 1966, the unemployment rate for experienced workers in the construction industry was 8.8 percent, considerably below the 12.3 percent in March 1965. For carpenters, the rate had fallen from 11.8 percent to 8.1 percent. For other construction craftsmen the rate had fallen from 10.3 percent to 7.8 percent. For laborers the rate fell from 22.7 percent to 15.6 percent. The most recent data indicate that laborers made up approximately one-third of total unemployed construction workers.

Currently, shortages of some building trades workers are being reported, especially in the North Central States. Trades most often mentioned as being in short supply are electrical workers, plumbers and pipefitters, ironworkers, carpenters, bricklayers, and sheet metal workers.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

In 1960 the median age of male employees in the construction industry was approximately the same as for all employed male workers in the American economy. One major difference was a relatively smaller proportion of construction workers employed in the very young group, 14 to 19 years of age. (See table 6.)

This lower proportion of young workers in the construction industry is probably due to regulations prohibiting employment of extremely young workers in many of these occupations in many States.

Data are not available on the age distribution of building trades workers in the construction industry; however, they are available for selected building trades in all industries. (Approximately 70 percent of all building trades workers are employed in the construction industry.) The following table presents these data plus the proportion of workers in each occupation 45 and over—a key factor in determining future replacement needs.