

REPORT

(1) THE REHABILITATION ACT

ENACTED in October, 1941, the Rehabilitation Act was designed to provide for the re-establishment in civil life of men and women who have served with His Majesty's forces during the present war, and also for the reconstruction of war-time industries on a peace-time basis.

The Act provided for the establishment of a National Rehabilitation Council and also a Rehabilitation Board.

The principal function of the Rehabilitation Council is defined as that of making recommendations to the Minister in Charge of Rehabilitation, after inquiry and investigations, in relation to the re-establishment of discharged servicemen in civil life.

The Rehabilitation Board, under the authority of the Minister of Rehabilitation, is charged with the responsibility of making all provision necessary for the establishment in civil life of discharged servicemen and of servicemen's widows. To this end the Board is empowered to use and co-ordinate the services of various State Departments and other organizations.

Specifically the Board is empowered (i) to acquire property for disposal to discharged servicemen ; (ii) to afford financial assistance to discharged servicemen ; (iii) to impart vocational training to, and arrange employment for, discharged servicemen ; (iv) to recommend to the Government any modifications necessary to ensure entry into any employment or occupation.

Administrative expenses and any moneys expended or advanced by the Board are chargeable to War Expenses Account.

A serviceman is defined by the Act as " any person who, while ordinarily resident in New Zealand, has at any time during the present war :—

- " (a) Served outside New Zealand as a member of any of His Majesty's naval, military, or air forces ; or
- " (b) Served in New Zealand as a member of the training staff of any of His Majesty's forces ; or
- " (c) Served in New Zealand as a member of any of His Majesty's permanent forces, or as a member of any of His Majesty's forces mobilized for continuous service within New Zealand ; or
- " (d) Served in any capacity in any British ship which while he was serving therein was damaged or destroyed as a result of enemy action, or in any other British ship which was not a home-trade ship or an intercolonial trading ship within the meaning of the Shipping and Seamen Act, 1908."

The latter part of the Act provides for the establishment of a Reconstruction Account from which moneys are to be disbursed for the purpose of converting the Dominion's primary and secondary industries to a peace-time basis, and the expansion of production in the Dominion.

(2) THE REHABILITATION BOARD AND THE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

On 23rd January, 1942, the personnel of the National Rehabilitation Council were appointed by the Government ; and one month later the Rehabilitation Board, under the Ministerial jurisdiction of the Hon. R. Semple, Minister of Rehabilitation, and the chairmanship of Mr. M. Moohan, was established.

As at 31st March, 1943, the National Rehabilitation Council had met six times in Wellington under the chairmanship of the Minister, while the Rehabilitation Board had by the same date held seventy-eight formal meetings and a number of informal meetings and discussions besides.

The National Rehabilitation Council has discharged effectively its responsibility to advise and inform the Minister on policy matters affecting the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen, and its members, both as Council members and local Rehabilitation Committee members, have given valued co-operation to the Board in its implementation of policy.

The Rehabilitation Board's plan of work has been—

- (1) To establish departmental machinery capable of efficient administration of policy. (How this has been secured is dealt with in Section 4 of the report.)
- (2) To appoint specialist Committees of the Board under the chairmanship of members of the Board to formulate policy in special subjects and watch administration, and to deal also with particular problems. (The following Committees are permanently operating : Trade Training, Education, Land-settlement and Farm Training, Loans, and Maori Rehabilitation ; while additional ones will, where necessary, be established.)
- (3) To ensure the democratic and sympathetic implementation of policy by the establishment of local Rehabilitation Committees charged with the responsibility of supervising all rehabilitation activities in their particular areas.

Table I of the Appendix gives the names of the six Rehabilitation Board members and also those of the original nineteen members of the National Rehabilitation Council. Changes in the complement of the Council since its inception are also shown.