

Founding of Training and Welfare Centres.—Following the decision of the Rehabilitation Board to appoint the League as the official organization responsible for the training of disabled ex-servicemen from the present war, the League requested the Rehabilitation Board to provide suitable training and recreational centres for the League's branches. This was approved by the Government, and sites have been selected and plans prepared for the erection of training centres at Wellington and Dunedin, while sites are being selected at Auckland and Christchurch. The erection of the Wellington Training Centre is now nearing completion and will provide accommodation for up to 150 trainees. In the training centres particular attention is to be paid to the recreation of the disabled men, and social and recreational facilities will definitely be provided with a view to assisting not only the vocational training of the men, but also their social re-adjustment.

Training Facilities. The League is at present providing employment and training in the following trades and occupations: Cabinetmaking; woodwork; leather-work; basketware; seagrass furniture; manufacture of household mops, feather and wool dusters, perambulators and sulkys, sheep-skin rugs, paua-shell jewellery, suede-work, marquetry, inlaid woodwork, carved woodwork, &c. Training facilities for clogmaking, boot-repairing and the manufacture of surgical boots and splints are also being organized.

Field Officers.—The League has appointed one Field Officer, who has returned from the present war, and two additional officers will be appointed in the near future. These officers will be stationed at Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, and will cover the territory within their districts. Their duties are to study the cases of men with major disabilities and guide them into channels of training or employment most suitable for each particular case. This is one of the most important phases of the League's work, as it ensures that disabled men will be given the opportunity to engage in some useful occupation.

Manufacture of Artificial Limbs.—As previously mentioned, the Rehabilitation Board acquired the business of the McKay Co-operative Orthopaedic Society, and has transferred this activity to the League for administration. The manufacture of artificial limbs will, in the future, be carried out in the new training centre of the Wellington Branch of the League, and a number of limbless men from the present war will be trained in this work. Fitting-rooms and repair workshops will also be provided at the training centres at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin.

Paua-shell Jewellery. A new workshop was opened in Wellington during the year for the training of disabled men in the manufacture of paua-shell jewellery. This industry is particularly suitable for men with major disabilities. Four men from the present war are being trained in this craft by a competent instructor. High quality goods inlaid in silver from the Waihi Mine are being manufactured and find a very ready sale. It is hoped not only to supply New Zealand requirements, but also to build up an export trade after hostilities have ceased. Steps are being taken to have this industry protected and reserved for disabled ex-servicemen.

Perambulators and other Cane Goods.—The training of disabled ex-servicemen in the manufacture of perambulators has been commenced by the Southland Branch of the League at Invercargill. Three men are being trained in this work by a competent tradesman. Supplies of cane, which prior to the war were imported from Hong Kong, are no longer available. The League, however, has 15 acres of Osier willow under cultivation, and this will be substituted for cane in the future manufacture of these and other cane goods.

Home Handicrafts.—Men with severe war disabilities who are incapable of any sustained effort are trained in handicrafts which they can pursue at their own homes. These goods are forwarded to the disabled servicemen's shops for sale to the public.

Statistical. The number of disabled men employed or receiving training by the League was, as at 31st March, as follows:

Home workers—

First New Zealand Expeditionary Force	..	..	..	..	67
Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force	..	..	..	..	3
Factory workers: First New Zealand Expeditionary Force	..	..	..	..	43
Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force trainees—					
With subsidy	..	..	..	..	20
Without subsidy	..	..	..	..	5
Placed in private employment after completion of training	..	..	..	..	1
Sent for training to private employers	..	..	..	..	3
Sent for training to technical schools	..	..	..	..	2

These figures will be considerably increased when the new training centres have been provided.

The League officers have worked in close co-operation with the officers of the Rehabilitation Service.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to the Disabled Servicemen's Re-establishment League, such organizations as the New Zealand War Amputees' Association, the Jubilee Institute for the Blind, and the New Zealand League for the Hard of Hearing have co-operated with the Rehabilitation Service. The co-operation of these organizations, as the types of cases with which they are concerned become more numerous, can be expected to become increasingly valuable.

(15) THE MAORI EX-SERVICEMAN

The aim of the Board has been, and remains, to regard Maoris and pakehas alike and to extend to Maori ex-servicemen the same facilities for re-establishment as are afforded ex-servicemen of European descent.

The need for special Maori rehabilitation measures beyond those already available within the general rehabilitation plan is, however, realized.

Since a total of only 291 Maori ex-servicemen and women had been invalided home from overseas by 31st March of this year, and 310 demobilized from camps in New Zealand, the Board has not yet put in hand any complete organizational measures for the administration of Maori rehabilitation. It has, however, made considerable research into the various questions involved, and has formulated, ready for implementation at the appropriate time, plans which are expected to facilitate the industrial reabsorption of all serving Maoris in such a way as to take full account of their social needs.