

Gifts of Farm Properties and Stock.—The Board is pleased to record that, through the generosity and public-spiritedness of Mr. George Alley, Tauranga, nine farms in the Te Puke district with a total acreage of 2,300 acres have been vested in trustees for the farm training of ex-servicemen. The Trust is known as the "Homewood Trust." A farm hostel is situated one mile from the Te Puke Post-office, and the farm properties are within a workable radius of the hostel. During the 1942-43 season the trust properties were utilized for mixed farming with sheep and run cattle, and it is proposed to establish a dairy herd during the coming season.

The trustees of the Wairarapa Training Farm (near Masterton), acquired by the Government after the last war as a result of gift and patriotic donations, have also placed this farm and its appointments at the disposal of the Rehabilitation Board.

The Wairarapa Training Farm has an area of 800 acres, and the trustees have expressed their readiness to meet feeding, accommodation, and other costs incurred in connection with the training of a limited number of men. The Board has in hand the selection of suitable trainee ex-servicemen for training on this holding during the coming season.

A property of 600 acres located at Dipton, Southland, was gifted to the Crown by the late Sir Robert Anderson for subdivision and leasing to Southland ex-servicemen under the Small Farms Act, 1932-33. Provision was also made by the donor for the net revenues from these leases to be devoted to assisting the widows and orphans of deceased Southland servicemen.

The Land Settlement Board has undertaken the preparation of the land for settlement, and during the period that control is retained by the Crown a minimum sum of £250 per annum is being paid into the Anderson Block Trust Fund, which is to be administered by a Trust Board in terms of the donor's bequest.

A gift calf scheme inaugurated by the Returned Services' Association in the Matamata district resulted in 166 calves being made available for farm-settlement purposes. These have now been taken over by the Board and are being carried on the Homewood Trust property.

Rural Housing.—The Board is fully conscious of the fact that the provision of adequate and suitable rural housing is of paramount importance in the land-settlement scheme. The lack of reasonably good housing accommodation for farm employees desirous of marrying has been one of the chief deterrents to an adequate supply of reliable farm labour. The Board will co-operate with the Government to ensure adequate housing accommodation where a married farm worker can maintain his wife and family in comfort.

The preliminary survey made shows that rural housing will be required not only for subdivisions of blocks which will be developed for settlement by ex-servicemen and on the subdivision of properties purchased and sufficiently developed for immediate subdivision and settlement, but also on privately owned farms where the owners are prepared to provide accommodation for a married ex-serviceman as a permanent employee.

Diversified Farming. The Board is fully alive to the expressed desire of many ex-servicemen to engage in fruit-farming, tobacco-farming, poultry-farming, growing of vegetables, and other small-farm production, and this aspect is receiving close attention. The provision of suitable allotments for ex-servicemen suffering from a permanent disability and receiving full pensions to enable them to occupy their energies and supplement their pension grants is also being dealt with.

(ii) FARM TRAINING

It has been apparent to the Board that its land settlement plans could not be applied immediately to ex-servicemen who are desirous of taking up farming on their own account, but have not had sufficient experience. The question of farm training has occupied a prominent place in the attention of the Board.

The Board has regarded applicants for assistance to settle on holdings as falling into one or other of the following classes, viz.

- (a) Experienced men qualified for immediate settlement.
- (b) Partly experienced men in need of further training before settlement would be prudent.
- (c) Inexperienced men who, after training, would be suitable for settlement.
- (d) Men who, for one or more reasons, would not be suitable for settlement on farm properties.

The Board has decided that those falling in classes (b) and (c) should be required to undergo a period of training, and that, in addition to other facilities for training, use will be made of existing organizations to select suitable farmers prepared to employ and train or complete the training of selected men. Care will be taken to oversee all ex-servicemen undergoing training not only to watch their individual progress, but to ensure that they are receiving correct and adequate instruction. In order to ensure that inexperienced ex-servicemen will receive a reasonable living wage, a subsidy during the training period is proposed. Use will, of course, be made of the Alley and Wairarapa Trust properties for the training of accepted applicants.

When subdivisions of a block are being made available, applications will be invited from all ex-servicemen in class (a)—viz., those with good experience and qualified for immediate settlement—and disposal will be by way of ballot. When any of this class of applicants desire it, they may be given a short intensive course of instruction of two to three months at Canterbury Agricultural College (Lincoln), Massey Agricultural College (Palmerston North), or at other farm instruction centres. Provision will be made for those in class (b) to take a short course as outlined above after gaining additional experience with carefully selected farmers or on development areas of the Lands Department. Those in class (c) will be allocated to one of the training centres for tuition for a period of four weeks to make them immediately useful to a farmer employer, with whom they will be placed for further experience.

The Board intends that farms and adequate financial assistance will be available to suitable ex-servicemen for up to ten years after the cessation of hostilities, thus placing all on an equitable basis and ensuring that the fullest benefits will accrue from the comprehensive farm training schemes in operation. With this assurance, trainees may confidently undergo the full course of training without their prospects of ultimate settlement being prejudiced. Similarly, the interests of servicemen still overseas and those who are prisoners of war will be safeguarded.

Placement of Trainees. Arrangements are in progress for the making available of a limited number of holdings at the start of the 1943-44 farming season. The Board is prepared to make immediate arrangements for the training of up to fifty ex-servicemen on the blocks which are being developed.