

219. In the employment field generally the placement or self-placement of Maori ex-servicemen has so far presented little difficulty. This position is, however, likely to become less satisfactory as greater numbers of Maori ex-servicemen are demobilized and concentrated in Native communal areas and as the general shortage of agricultural and allied labour in such localities is overcome. The placement of Maori ex-servicemen who transfer to European centres of population presents no problem, but, inasmuch as a wholesale shift of native population to European centres is neither practicable nor desirable from the viewpoint of the Maoris, the employment problem becomes increasingly one of providing industrial openings in proximity to Maori settlements. As the land areas occupied by Maori communities, even if fully developed, could not provide all with the desired standard of living, the need appears to be for positive action in the direction of establishing small scale industrial and handicraft ventures close to centres of Maori population. This need is at the core of the entire Maori question, and it affects Maori ex-servicemen returning to Native communities just as it affects the other members of such communities.

220. Table XXV of Appendix II gives details of the progress reached in dealing with the 765 returned servicemen and 1 returned servicewoman and 509 home servicemen and 11 women whose cases have so far been handled.

(iii) Farm Training and Land-settlement

221. Although native lands are not in all districts sufficient to provide all Maoris with a reasonable standard of living, much importance is attached to agricultural policy in Maori rehabilitation, and the Maori Rehabilitation Finance Committee is acquiring lands for the settlement of Maori ex-servicemen just as is the Lands Department for the settlement of pakeha ex-servicemen. To date only one considerable property, the Carroll Estate of 1,700 acres in the Hawke's Bay, has been acquired for this purpose, but other properties are to be purchased as necessary.

222. Clarification of ownership of Native lands presents a difficulty in establishing Maori ex-servicemen, and already it is evident that two approaches to the question are possible. First, there is that which seeks to individualize land and after development place single ex-servicemen on it as freehold farmers or Crown lessees in somewhat the same way as is done with European ex-servicemen settlers. The second approach is that which, recognizing the joint title under which much Native land is held and the suitability of communal endeavour for Maori people living in Maori communities, seeks to develop jointly held property on a co-operative basis and establish ex-servicemen within the framework of such co-operative endeavour. This latter approach involves an overlapping of the problems of Maori ex-serviceman settlement and Native settlement generally, but unless the joint owners of land are all ex-servicemen this overlapping is inevitable.

223. While the training and establishment of ex-servicemen on single unit holdings is the more orthodox method and therefore the one more readily followed, the Rehabilitation Board, in co-operation with the Board of Native Affairs, is directing research into the second approach.

224. Thus far few Maori ex-servicemen have been established on farms, but several have been graded under the European procedure and are at present undergoing training of one or another kind.

225. Table XVI of Appendix II, which gives details of all farm trainees, includes the several Maori trainees so far in training.

(iv) Housing

226. Maori ex-servicemen have equal opportunity with pakeha ex-servicemen in the allocation of State rental dwellings and in the provision of financial assistance to purchase existing dwellings or erect new ones. Where finance is provided for the erection of a dwelling importance is attached to the continuous availability of employment in the locality in question.

227. The problem of Native housing is, if anything, more acute than the general housing problem. In an attempt to provide an immediate partial solution special arrangements have been made by the Maori Rehabilitation Finance Committee for the assembly of temporary dwellings constructed from disused service hutments. This provision is of a temporary nature only and is not regarded by the Rehabilitation Board as offering a final solution to the housing difficulties of Maori ex-servicemen.

SECTION XV.—THE FUTURE IN FOCUS

228. A short statement of the objectives of rehabilitation as the Board sees them is contained in the Preface to the report, while the mechanical rules for the time being observed in determining what different ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen may expect in the way of assistance are defined in Appendix I. The body of the report is a record of situations met and assistance rendered in particular fields. It remains to restate briefly the major rehabilitation questions that will require to be dealt with in the future—in other words, to bring the future of rehabilitation into focus at this stage as far as is practicable.

229. The dominant marks of the picture thereby revealed are now dealt with in turn.

230. Firstly, in the sphere of organization the needs that have yet to be filled appear to be further integration of Board and Committee procedure attended by decentralization of executive functions; expansion of departmental staffs (those of Agent Departments as well as the Rehabilitation Department); and, of course, provision of adequate suitable departmental accommodation. These developments are at present retarded by the relative administrative inexperience of the personnel of Committees and the experimental nature of certain procedure in operation; the difficulty in obtaining sufficient officers of the necessary calibre; and the great difficulty in providing adequate suitable office accommodation.

231. Secondly, in the sphere of demobilization the creation of adequate machinery, both overseas and in New Zealand, to handle the mass demobilization of the Forces and their smooth and speedy reception into New Zealand is an obvious need. Building on the facilities already in existence to deal with this aspect detailed plans are, as far as is possible, being worked out in advance in co-operation with the Service Arms and other interested organizations.