

PART I.—REHABILITATION

SECTION I.—ORGANIZATION

(i) Reorganization of Rehabilitation Board

1. Following the transfer of the portfolio of Rehabilitation in August, 1943, to Major the Hon. C. F. Skinner, M.C., a returned serviceman of the present war, the Rehabilitation Board was reorganized.

2. Mr. M. Moohan, who had been Chairman of the Board since its inception in February, 1942, in retiring from the Board in October, 1943, relinquished this office to the Minister. The present Board takes this opportunity of placing on record the great contribution made by Mr. Moohan to the very difficult question of formulating the original rehabilitation plan. This gentleman showed great breadth of vision in conceiving many of the original principles on which rehabilitation is still based, and displayed unbounded energy in giving effect to the various decisions which were made during his term of office. At the first meeting of the Rehabilitation Council following Mr. Moohan's retirement, the warmest tributes were paid by all members of the Council to the work which Mr. Moohan had done.

3. Subsequently two sitting members of the Board, Mr. C. W. Batten and Mr. S. W. Gaspar, were appointed full-time salaried members and were located in the Head Office of the new Rehabilitation Department. In addition, the newly-appointed Director of Rehabilitation became a member of the Board.

4. In February of the current year the Board was further enlarged by the addition of one of the joint Managing Directors of the State Advances Corporation, the Under-Secretary for Lands, and the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs. The addition of representatives of the Corporation and these two Departments to the Board was undertaken because each of them acts as an agent of the Board in its particular field. It was considered that the appointment of a representative to the Board would contribute to understanding by the Departments concerned of the numerous aspects of rehabilitation.

5. The executive work of the Board has been much facilitated by the establishment of executive committees—namely, the Loans, Lands, Trade Training, Education, and Maori Finance Committees. Each of these committees, subject to the unanimous decision of its members and the overriding decision of the Board, wields the executive authority of the Board in its particular field.

6. Between March and November, 1943, the Board met on thirty-two occasions and between November, 1943, and March, 1944, on nine occasions. In addition, the Executive Sub-committee comprising the Minister of Rehabilitation, the Director, and Messrs. C. W. Batten, S. W. Gaspar, and E. L. Cullen, M.P., has met seventeen times since it was set up in November last.

7. Table I of Appendix II gives the names of Board members.

(ii) The Council

8. The personnel and functions of the Rehabilitation Council have not changed during the year. As reported in the first annual report of the Board, members of the National Rehabilitation Council, as Council members, as members of Standing Committees of the Board, and as Local Rehabilitation Committee members, have given valuable assistance to the Minister and the Board. The Council has met twice since April, 1943, and arrangements have been made for it to meet regularly at quarterly intervals henceforth. All members of the Council are *ex officio* members of the local Rehabilitation Committee in the centre where they reside, and the majority of them are also members of advisory or executive Committees of the Board. By this means they are kept fully informed on current developments and the fullest use is made of their specialized knowledge when formulating rehabilitation policy.

9. Table II of Appendix II contains the names of Council members.

(iii) Rehabilitation Committees

10. The first annual report of the Board (1943) advised that sixty local Rehabilitation Committees had been set up and that provision had been made for a further thirty-nine Committees.

11. The number of local Rehabilitation Committees now in existence is 110, and it is not expected that any further considerable addition in Committees will be necessary. There is, however, a distinct tendency towards the setting-up of sub-committees of existing local Rehabilitation Committees to facilitate the handling of particular matters, such as loans, trade training, care of disabled men, &c. This development is regarded as having the dual advantage of enabling specialization by Committee members in particular matters and expedition in the turnover of Committee work.

12. As rehabilitation policy has developed and the experience of Committee members has increased additional functions have been entrusted to local Committees. The stage has now been reached where local Committees, in execution of their basic responsibility to assist in the rehabilitation of all ex-servicemen in their district, are yielding a valuable advisory service not only to the Board and the various State Departments involved, but also to individual ex-servicemen encountering particular difficulties. Except with unimportant forms of assistance, which may be dispensed directly by departmental officers, the determination of the extent of assistance of all kinds merited by ex-servicemen applicants rests largely in the hands of the local Committees. The technical investigation of the feasibility of proposals submitted by ex-servicemen and supported by Committees as well as the actual provision of the assistance in question, however, remain administrative functions of the Board, working through the Rehabilitation Department and the Departments acting as agents. It is expected that the co-opting of various district departmental officers by local Committees and sub-committees will further integrate the work of Committees with that of Departments.