

13. The Board records the valuable contributions in time and effort that the several hundred Committee members throughout New Zealand have made towards the execution of the common task. It considers that the successful initiation of rehabilitation measures in New Zealand has in large part been due to the public spirited and zealous co-operation of Committees. The future success of the Board's policy measures will, in its opinion, call for continued co-operation from representative local interests, and it looks forward confidently to continuation of such co-operation.

14. Table III of Appendix II contains the names of all centres in which local Rehabilitation Committees are at present operating.

SECTION II.—DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Establishment of Rehabilitation Department

15. The establishment of the Rehabilitation Department in November, 1943, ended the arrangement under which the Rehabilitation Division of the National Service Department acted as the administrative secretariat of the Board.

16. The new Department assumed direct responsibility for the administration of the Board's policy in all fields, although this did not involve the displacement of a number of State Departments from particular fields in which they were already acting as agents of the Board.

(ii) Appointment of Director and Staff

17. Coincident with the establishment of the Rehabilitation Department Lieutenant-Colonel F. Baker was appointed to the position of Director. The new Director prior to the war had been engaged in a number of the Departments in the Government Service, and for some four years before joining the 2nd N.Z.E.F. as a Lieutenant in 1939 had been Head Office Inspector in the State Advances Corporation. He served with the Forces in the Middle East, where, in addition to serving in other units, he commanded the 28th N.Z. (Maori) Battalion, attaining the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and the award of the D.S.O., besides being twice mentioned in despatches. Lieutenant-Colonel Baker is a member of the New Zealand Society of Accountants and of the Australian Institute of Secretaries.

18. The Rehabilitation Division of the National Service Department was absorbed into the Rehabilitation Department, and the majority of the staff was either transferred to the new Department or temporarily seconded thereto. Applications were called for the position of District Rehabilitation Officer in each of the twenty-three centres where the former Rehabilitation Division already had offices and in seven other centres at which it was proposed to open a Rehabilitation office. In effecting appointments preference was given to public servants who had returned from service overseas, either in the Great War or in the present war. To date Rehabilitation Officers have been appointed to almost all of the thirty centres in which a district office already exists or is planned. Both Head and District Office staffs were augmented by the appointment of additional specialist and clerical personnel.

(iii) Retention of Agent Departments

19. The establishment of the Department did not result in abandonment of the policy whereby the services of certain other specialist Departments continued to be used by the Board. These Departments, more notably the State Advances Corporation in connection with financial assistance; Lands and Survey Department in land settlement and development; the War Pensions Branch of the Social Security Department in connection with Rehabilitation allowances; the Labour Department in connection with occupational re-establishment; and the Native Department in connection with Maori Rehabilitation continued to act as agents of the Rehabilitation Board.

20. Almost every Department of State is in some way involved in rehabilitation activity, and for this reason the somewhat widely advocated case for an all-embracing self-contained Rehabilitation Department has not been conceded. Agent organizations act on behalf and under direction of the Board, and already it has been amply demonstrated that this arrangement promotes and does not impair the efficiency with which rehabilitation work generally is performed. The other Departments, as in the case of the Rehabilitation Department, are at present handicapped by shortage of suitable staff, and until this situation eases it must be expected to affect in some degree the efficiency of the Rehabilitation organization.

(iv) Decentralization of Departmental Work

21. When the Department had been in existence a short time it was found possible to entrust to District Offices much of the administrative case work previously carried out in the Head Office. Where previously all cases of ex-servicemen were brought under the surveillance of the Head Office by means of a rigid progress-reporting system the increasing development of policy and growing experience of district officers permitted the entire handling of all but the most difficult individual cases by local Rehabilitation officers assisted by Rehabilitation Committees.

22. It is contemplated that as policy measures are still more clearly and completely defined administration will become increasingly a local responsibility. Thus the stage should be reached where the Head Office will be principally concerned with formulating, circulating, and supervising policy measures.

(v) Summary of Departmental and Committee Machinery

23. Table IV of Appendix II illustrates diagrammatically the departmental and Committee machinery established by the Board to implement its policy.

24. The Table shows the Board (and the Executive Sub-Committee) as the first link in the chain of authority. Next come the specialist executive Committees of the Board dealing with Financial Assistance, Farm Training and Settlement, Trade Training, Education, and Maori Rehabilitation, and working through the Head Office of the Rehabilitation Department. The 30 district rehabilitation centres and 21 sub rehabilitation centres, and their relationship both to the Head Office of the Department and the appropriate ones of the 110 Rehabilitation Committees, are next illustrated.