

B. PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT

(i) General Placement

119. The industrial absorption of fit ex-servicemen has to date presented no problem. The general man-power shortage, together with the buoyant industrial conditions obtaining, has ensured the placement or self-placement of all ex-servicemen as they became fit and available. The extent to which this has been so is illustrated by Table XIII of Appendix II, which shows the total of both fit returned and home service men and women awaiting placement as at 31st March, 1944, to be as low as 71. Even this figure would represent mainly the number of men and women available for placement at the end of a given period and the bulk of them would have been placed or self-placed shortly after the period in question.

120. Rehabilitation Officers have endeavoured, with considerable success, to dissuade men from postponing their establishment in more stable if less remunerative employment because of the lure of the relatively high wages of purely wartime jobs.

121. Table XII of Appendix II shows the industrial distribution of some 27,725 of the 42,656 ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen whose cases have been dealt with by the Rehabilitation Department. It also shows the stage and mode of disposal of the balance of 14,931 who for varying reasons are not in industry. It will be seen from this table that self-placement and self-establishment in own businesses have accounted for the industrial absorption of a much greater number of men than has placement by the Department. This is so, notwithstanding that many men who are shown as self-placed in employment or self-established in businesses or on farms have been so only after leaving one or more positions in which they were placed by the Department. Regardless of with whom lies the responsibility for their absorption it is evident from Table XIII (table showing stages in disposal of cases of all ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen whose cases have so far been dealt with) that the re-employment of fit ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen in New Zealand has so far given no cause for concern.

(ii) Relations with Man-power Authorities

122. Although the regulations under which the industrial man-power procedure of the National Service Department is administered empower Man-power Officers to direct all ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen into suitable employment and to withhold consent to termination of employment, this power has not been used except in the cases of Grade I returned servicemen and home-servicemen generally. Grade I returned servicemen have in general been brought back for specific essential work. Thus while men demobilized after service in New Zealand only have generally been subject to man-power direction the majority of returned men —i.e., those medically graded lower than Grade I have been exempted from direction. It has been found that the operation of the general supply and man-power controls has tended to restrict the employment of non-directed returned men to essential or nearly essential employment, a conclusion supported by a comparison between the industrial destinations of returned (generally undirected) men and those of ex-home-servicemen (generally directed) shown in Table XII of Appendix II.

123. The Board records its satisfaction at the harmonious co-operation extended by Man-power Officers in dealing with the cases of ex-servicemen subject to direction, and also in supplying Rehabilitation Officers with particulars of special vacancies notified by employers to them and likely to be suitable for ex-servicemen who might be available for placement.

(iii) Intermediate Employment Schemes

124. While the re-employment of fit ex-servicemen has presented no great problem it has already tended to be otherwise in so far as recuperating and partially-disabled men fit for light work only have been concerned. Of small magnitude, and in no way serious at present, this difficulty can be expected to grow greatly as further drafts of sick and wounded men are repatriated.

125. With the declared objective of providing suitable temporary therapeutic employment for recuperating ex-servicemen as a means of hastening their successful re-absorption into the industrial and social life of the community the Rehabilitation Board has obtained Cabinet approval to the establishment of local Intermediate Employment Schemes as necessary. One such local scheme is already in existence and others are being arranged.

126. Intermediate Schemes will generally be arranged with local bodies in co-operation with the local Rehabilitation Centre, and subsidy on the basis of labour-cost in respect of each man will be payable by the Board. As would be expected from the objective of the scheme, the local body or other employing authority would require to provide congenial light employment with facilities for work under cover in wet weather. Importance is attached to the separation of Intermediate Scheme work from existing local authority works. The stipulation that an Intermediate Scheme will not be approved if its commencement would displace unsubsidized local-body employees arises from the necessity of distinguishing between civilian employment promotion works, which are not a concern of the Board, and the special recuperative employment envisaged under the Intermediate Scheme procedure. There is provision for the payment of award wages to Scheme employees; rest pause and time off concessions where necessary; review of individual cases aided by medical opinion; and transfer to selected employment in industry as soon as readjustment and recuperation have proceeded sufficiently far.

127. Although only one such scheme (the Ocean Beach Intermediate Scheme) has so far been commenced, the results achieved from it have been so encouraging as to recommend the extension of the idea to other centres where the benefit of experiments at Ocean Beach will enure.

128. A recent survey of cases likely to benefit either from special after-care measures in a rest centre or from employment on Intermediate Schemes has put the Department in possession of the necessary information to negotiate schemes with local bodies in the centres indicated by the survey.