

Building Loan that is offered by the Board is the provision of plans and specifications, together with the supervision of the construction of the house. The Corporation has a wide selection of plans which have been designed by architects in various parts of the Dominion, and from this source it should be possible for any applicant to obtain a design suited to his particular requirements. It is unfortunate that during the last few years there has been unusual difficulty in obtaining the building material and labour, but it is expected that as soon as conditions again become more normal there will be a revival of interest in the Special Loans Scheme. It is hoped by the Board of Management that this will apply particularly to ex-servicemen from the present war who are eligible for assistance under the Rehabilitation Scheme. During the past year there has been an increased activity under both the urban and rural borrowing, and the large proportion of the borrowers are in the ex-serviceman class. The following is a summary of the loans granted during the period:—

|       |         | Number. | Amount.<br>£ |
|-------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Urban | .. .. . | 1,228   | 1,229,096    |
| Rural | .. .. . | 323     | 791,925      |

3. *Interest Rate.*—The Corporation's lending rate of 4½ per cent., which has been in operation for some years, has been maintained.

4. *Financing Increased Production.*—The need for providing food for the Armed Forces overseas and for the people of Great Britain has given rise to special schemes for increased production, and the Government has, where necessary, provided financial aid to those who have been called upon to assist in the production drive. The Board of Management has been pleased to make available for this purpose the services of its specially trained Field Staff and to carry out any clerical work that became necessary in connection with the various proposals. A considerable number of farmers have been granted loan finance for the purpose of purchasing additional stock or carrying out improvements on their farms to enable them to handle an increased output. A special scheme was inaugurated for the purpose of providing housing for additional employees on farms, and the Corporation's staff was employed on investigating the needs of each case and arranging for the provision of temporary hutments where this was found to be necessary.

The request received from the British Government for an increased supply of cheese in 1942 entailed the provision of finance for those dairy factories which agreed to change over from butter production to cheese, or to increase the output of the latter commodity. The subsequent decision to revert to normal quantities of butter and cheese necessitated a review of each of the contracts made with the companies concerned, and the Corporation has been entrusted with the responsibility of negotiating for a settlement of the claims for compensation, and it has already been possible to make a final settlement with the majority of the companies.

5. *Soldiers' Financial Assistance.*—Following the Government's decision in 1940 to set up a Soldiers' Financial Assistance Board for the purpose of considering applications from soldiers or their dependants who through loss of income were unable to meet their normal and reasonable financial commitments, the Corporation was requested to undertake the investigation of the individual applications and to perform all the necessary work arising therefrom. This involved the verification of the statements in regard to income and expenditure, and, on the receipt of the Board's decision, the disbursement of any grants that were approved. As an indication of the volume of this work there is submitted hereunder a statement showing the grants approved and the total amount involved during the four years since the Board was established:—

|         |         | Number. | Grant.<br>£ |
|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| 1940-41 | .. .. . | 2,815   | 43,092      |
| 1941-42 | .. .. . | 3,375   | 149,081     |
| 1942-43 | .. .. . | 11,877  | 350,205     |
| 1943-44 | .. .. . | 3,427   | 197,779     |
| Total   | .. .. . | 21,494  | £740,157    |

It has been the policy of the Board to provide that each of the grants should be subject to review at annual periods for the purpose of ensuring that any change of circumstances affecting either the soldier or his dependants would be taken into account for the subsequent period. As the number of cases brought under this system has increased, so has the work of preparing the reviews, and for the year ending 31st March, 1944, 8,639 cases were reviewed by the Board. The payments made under authority of the Soldiers' Financial Assistance Board are provided from the War Expenses Account.