

PREFACE

(i) With the cessation of hostilities in Europe on 8th May, 1945, and in the Pacific on 15th August, 1945, all aspects of the problems of rehabilitation of ex-service personnel crystalized into definite shape, and the natural effects of demobilization at increased tempo and consequent increased demand for rehabilitation assistance have, by the end of the year under review, placed rehabilitation to the forefront of the many post-war problems now receiving consideration.

(ii) When the last annual report of the Rehabilitation Board was presented the demobilization figure of our Armed Forces stood at 68,675. At the date to which this report relates the relative figure is 151,400, an increase of 82,725, or 120 per cent. This increase was anticipated at the time of writing of the report for last year, when it was stated that experience to date had provided guides as to the directions in which organizational and administrative improvements in the Department might be made to cope with the anticipated increase of demand upon its services.

(iii) To a degree the staffing, accommodation, and other disabilities under which the Department was then working have been overcome and the needs of the additional large body of demobilized ex-servicemen have been reasonably well catered for except in certain very important fields where supply shortages, beyond the control of the Board, operate as factors mitigating against its best intentions.

(iv) The fundamentals of Rehabilitation are (1) to see the ex-serviceman suitably placed in employment or provided with the means of earning a livelihood, and (2) to see him suitably housed.

(v) In so far as employment is concerned, the facilities the Department has been able to provide in respect of—

(a) Placement in employment; and

(b) Training for suitable employment --

have proved reasonably adequate to meet the demands of the year under review, but, owing to the supply problem which has already been mentioned, difficulty has been encountered in—

(a) The provision of homes;

(b) The provision of farms; and

(c) The establishment in businesses of all those who desire and are qualified to acquire their own shops, factories, or mercantile organizations.

(vi) The difficulties at present inherent in these important phases of rehabilitation are the inevitable consequences of the war, which was the very reason for the establishment of the Rehabilitation Board and the formation of the Rehabilitation Department.