

(vi) Furniture

1. During the year interest-free loans for the purchase of household furniture were granted in 8,131 cases to the total of £754,509.

2. These figures represent an increase of 1,376 cases, involving £134,429 over the corresponding figures for the previous year, which were 6,755 loans, totalling £620,080.

3. To 31st March, 1947, 20,475 loans, involving £1,884,302, have been granted.

SECTION IX.—TRADE TRAINING**(i) General**

1. In initiating the scheme for training of ex-servicemen, the Rehabilitation Board was primarily concerned to give an opportunity to eligible ex-servicemen to enter that occupation to which they are best adapted, having regard to future employment prospects in that field. Along with this the Board's second aim is to ensure that the training programme is consistent with future national needs as far as these can be estimated.

2. Details of assistance granted under schemes "A," "B," and "C" are set out in Table VI of the appendix.

(ii) "A" Class Training**(a) General**

1. This training scheme, which provides full-time tuition, both theoretical and practical, under the supervision of the Board's instructors, has expanded considerably during the year; the over-all number of ex-servicemen under training having increased from 1,440 in March, 1946, to 2,575 in March, 1947. The number of men who have completed training during the same period has increased from 761 to 1,390.

2. Forty-one training centres for the full-time training of ex-servicemen in the building and ancillary trades now operate in 21 towns.

3. The number of ex-servicemen in training in the training centres as at 31st March, 1947, was :—

Carpenters	..	..	..	..	..	2,116
Plasterers	..	..	..	..	..	96
Bricklayers	..	..	..	..	..	99
Painters and paperhangers	..	..	..	..	..	252
Joiners	..	..	..	..	..	12
Total	..	..	..	..	..	2,575

Despite the relative magnitude of these numbers, applications received from eligible ex-servicemen for "A" Class trade training continue to exceed the number of vacancies in some schools. To ease the situation at the centres concerned surplus applicants have been diverted, wherever possible, to other centres having vacancies.

(b) Supply Situation

Despite the priority granted in the supply of timber to training centres, some difficulty has been encountered during the year in arranging that the continuity and standard of training will not be affected by delays in supply which occur from time to time. To a large extent the situation has been met by the creation of a "reservoir of trade work" in which supply can be obtained for the type of work concerned and to which trainees are temporarily diverted pending corrections of the supply situation.

(c) Construction of State Houses by Trainees

Under the scheme whereby the Commissioner of Works is responsible for co-ordinating the activities of Government Departments the Board is receiving full co-operation from the Housing Construction Department and other Departments concerned with the erection of State dwellings. Since the modest beginning of housing construction in 1942, 711 State houses have been built by "A" Class trainees during the course of their training, and 767 are at present under construction.