

PREFACE

1. For the Rehabilitation Board the year ended 31st March, 1948, has been one of considerable activity, and it is felt that the results achieved in all spheres of rehabilitation can be viewed with satisfaction. The year's work in each field of rehabilitation is dealt with in some detail in respective Sections of the attached report.

2. Table III of the Appendix to the report summarizes rehabilitation loan activity showing yearly totals and related aggregates as at the close of the six years ended 31st March, 1948. It will be seen from this total that, in the aggregate, rehabilitation loan activity has dropped only $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. from that of last year, which represented the Board's peak period. As the result of this major loan programme, coupled with the Board's other activities, substantial advantages have accrued to ex-servicemen.

3. The Farm Training and Settlement Scheme organized and controlled by the Board has enabled a large number of young, well-qualified men to be firmly established on the land, and has also been the means already of increasing the output of much-needed primary products. As the number of settlers grows, this effect will become even more marked.

4. Business loans, which have been granted to men who have been able to satisfy the Board that they possess the necessary qualifications, have provided the means of their establishment in business, and as the result of continuing buoyant trade conditions has enabled the majority of them already to obtain substantial equities in their respective businesses.

5. A total of 20,194 men have received loans for purchase or erection of homes, and with the allocation of 8,242 State rental houses to ex-servicemen under the preferential system has resulted in a total of 28,436 in all being transferred from unsatisfactory housing-conditions to permanent homes.

6. The trade and professional training given to thousands of ex-servicemen under the Trade Training and Educational Schemes administered by the Board has rehabilitated these ex-servicemen by providing them with skilled callings and, moreover, has supplied a large additional body of men to New Zealand's skilled professional and trade forces.

7. Despite what has already been done through the activities of the Board and associated organizations, a considerable amount of work yet remains to be done. This is particularly true in the fields of land-settlement and housing, where progress in the past and for some time to come has been, and will continue to be, dependent to a substantial degree on the supply of various necessary materials. The Board will continue to make the best use of the facilities available, to ensure that the major problem of firmly establishing ex-servicemen in civil life is completed as quickly as possible. To this end, the continued interest of all organizations, and, above all, the general public, is still needed if this task is to be quickly and satisfactorily completed.

8. Finally, it should be mentioned that with each succeeding year the number of ex-servicemen's cases requiring review, and an entirely new approach, continues to grow. Frequently the recurrence of a war injury or the general breakdown in an ex-serviceman's health following war service has necessitated his relinquishing a calling which he followed pre-service or which, in many cases, he undertook with the Board's assistance after his demobilization. Changes in local conditions, and in some cases in business conditions, have also forced ex-servicemen out of businesses or occupations which they have previously followed. In these, and in many other cases, it has been necessary, after full inquiry, to help the ex-serviceman reshape his whole life and, where necessary, grant financial or other assistance to enable him to take up a new career or, if possible, one related to his previous experience. The handling of these cases has provided a real test to the organization, and points to the need for the retention for a considerable time of staff of the highest calibre on rehabilitation work. It also again draws attention to the need for the continued interest of the general public in the rehabilitation problem.