

74. The taxi industry has continued to be a fruitful field for the settlement of ex-servicemen. During the past year 201 licences were obtained, while some 220 men were registered with the Department as desirous of entering this industry. The problem of replacement of the many worn vehicles in the industry continues to be acute.

75. The small number of ex-Army trucks allocated to ex-servicemen through the year on recommendations made by the Rehabilitation Board was totally inadequate to meet the demand, and this source of supply is nearing the point of exhaustion. The majority of those vehicles now coming forward are War Department types and not commercial ones.

76. In order to assist ex-servicemen in need of new vehicles essential to their effective rehabilitation, arrangements were made to obtain some additional imports of heavy cars and light trucks for special allocation by the Rehabilitation Board. However, the overseas supply position last year precluded more than a small number of heavy cars becoming available for special allocation, although with light trucks the position was more satisfactory. Ex-servicemen are continuing to have difficulty in obtaining replacements or vehicles for new ventures, and it is difficult at this stage to give any indication of the prospects of assisting such ex-servicemen.

(iii) Other Licensed Industries

77. Licences granted to ex-servicemen by the Bureau of Industry totalled 113 during the past year. The industries involved were petrol reselling, 76; pharmacy, 14; pawa shell, 14; footwear-manufacturing, 7; and radio-manufacturing (since delicensed), 2.

78. The Rehabilitation Department has been represented at each sitting of the Bureau of Industry and the interests of ex-servicemen have been carefully watched.

(iv) Business Supplies

79. During the year, import licences were granted by the Customs Department on the recommendation of the Rehabilitation Board to some 260 ex-servicemen. Sponsorship of applications for licences is given only after careful examination of the proposition to ensure that it is a rehabilitation measure, and if licences are granted on the recommendation of the Board the ex-servicemen's business operations are reviewed thereafter to ensure that he himself benefits to the greatest extent from the facilities granted.

80. The tool-store maintained by the Rehabilitation Department continued to receive supplies of tools and light equipment from the War Assets Realization Board for disposal to ex-servicemen requiring these supplies for their own businesses, trades, or professions. Of 7,188 applications received during the past year, 5,751 ex-servicemen were supplied with tools and light equipment, sales totalling £40,007 4s. 10d. The store commenced operations on 4th November, 1946, and in the seventeen months to 31st March, 1948, had received 9,209 applications and supplied ex-servicemen with equipment and tools to a total value of £50,510 14s. 1d. Prices have been specially fixed by War Assets Realization Board valuers, having regard to the quality of the individual article. The supplies available from surplus war assets have so dwindled that it has been decided to close the tool-store's operations on 30th June, 1948.

81. Ex-servicemen requiring controlled or rationed goods necessary for the establishing or maintenance of their businesses have continued to receive assistance by way of increased quotas. A further 486 were assisted under this heading during the year under review on the recommendation of the Rehabilitation Board, the total helped up to 31st March, 1948, being 1,974.