

SECTION XI.—FARM TRAINING AND SETTLEMENT

(i) General

82. With some falling off in the number of single-unit farms offering for purchase by qualified ex-servicemen with rehabilitation loan assistance, every effort has been made during the year to accelerate progress in the provision of sections on Crown blocks for selection by ballot. Here the two limiting factors which are causing the greatest concern are the acute shortage of fencing-wire and the difficulties in letting contracts, &c., for rural house-construction. The Farm Training Scheme has progressed satisfactorily and the interest of private farmers has been maintained.

(ii) Administration

83. Upon his appointment as a member of the Board, Mr. J. J. Granville assumed the Chairmanship of the Farms Advisory Committee. The Committee met at monthly intervals, and amongst the more important matters dealt with were—

- (a) Review of the progress in farm-settlement generally.
- (b) Establishment of ex-servicemen as horticulturalists, fruitgrowers, market-gardeners, poultry-farmers, apiarists, and raspberry-growers.
- (c) Problems in respect of the grading of applicants and the organization of a review of all gradings of ex-servicemen not settled.
- (d) The organization of post-settlement assistance.
- (e) Formulation of evidence for presentation to the Sheep Industry Commission.
- (f) Rates of pay and subsidy for all classes of farm training.
- (g) Review of ballot advertisement procedure.
- (h) Housing on land-settlement blocks.

(iii) Grading and Training

84. The grading system, by which applicants are classified according to farming experience and qualifications, and provided with any necessary training, has continued to operate smoothly. The number of new applications has, as expected, shown a considerable reduction on the previous year, when the effects of large drafts returned from overseas were reflected. Regradings during the year of applicants who have completed the training considered necessary have, on the other hand, occupied Farming Sub-committees to an increasing extent.

85. While there has been the usual seasonal fluctuation of vacancies on private farms for trainees, the position has been generally easier than during the preceding year and no great difficulties of placement have arisen at any stage of the year. Positions on farms offering married accommodation are still most difficult to secure, and assistance by way of housing-allowances to those men who are obliged to maintain a home away from their training employment is necessary for most married applicants.

86. During the year the Board decided to bring to a conclusion the rehabilitation training activities carried on at Wairarapa and Homewood Trust training farms, and this takes effect at the end of the present dairy- and sheep-farming season. It was apparent that there would not continue to be sufficient applicants for whom these farms provided special training, and there are now better opportunities for selected engagements on private farms.

87. It has been necessary to place some restrictions on the training of inexperienced ex-servicemen in classes of farming in which settlement opportunities present special difficulties. This now applies to a degree in sheep-farming, and here the Board endeavours to interest inexperienced applicants in a class of farming offering better scope for early settlement.