

88. At 31st March, 1948, 987 ex-servicemen were undergoing farm training of various types with rehabilitation assistance. Of these, 847 were employed with private farmers under subsidy, 100 were at agricultural colleges, and 40 were at rehabilitation training farms.

(iv) Settlement

89. The Land Settlement Board is employing a varying number of "A" grade ex-servicemen on wages with a promise of sections on the blocks where they are engaged, the number being 271 as at 31st March, 1948.

90. As stated in last year's report, grading figures show that at least 10,000 ex-servicemen will require rehabilitation assistance to be established on farms. As at 31st March, 1947, 3,609 men had been settled, and the target was to settle the balance within the next five years. The Farms Advisory Committee when reviewing the progress in settlement at the beginning of the current season estimated that total settlement on settlement blocks and on existing economic single units purchased with rehabilitation loan finance would reach 5,600 by the end of June, 1948, and that a further 1,000 men would be settled during the succeeding year. Present indications are that the estimated settlement for this season will be achieved. As at 31st March, 1948, a total of 5,158 had been settled on the land with rehabilitation assistance.

91. Details of the settlement figures are shown in Table IX of the Appendix.

92. During the year a suitable block of land was acquired in the Te Puke district for citrus settlement, and 11 sections have been allotted to qualified ex-servicemen for the establishment of citrus orchards. For these sections, in addition to the cost of the land and original improvements, rehabilitation loan assistance up to £2,000 will be available for additional permanent improvements (including dwelling). Further finance will be provided for individual development projects of an essential capital nature and for approved seasonal cropping projects. A special Committee, comprising members of the Te Puke Rehabilitation Farming Sub-committee and co-opted advisers, has been set up to assist the settlers with their establishment problem.

93. To 31st March, 1948, 451,391 acres had been purchased by voluntary negotiation for subdivision and settlement of ex-servicemen, 75,231 acres had been acquired under Part II of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act, 1943, and a further 114,166 acres had been taken under section 51 of the Act. The total area purchased specifically for ex-servicemen was therefore 640,788 acres. In addition, 74,610 acres of Crown land have been set aside for ex-servicemen settlement. At 31st March, 1948, 304,478 acres providing 939 units had been allotted either on permanent tenure or on wages with the promise of a title. A further 366,055 acres, estimated to provide 807 units, is at present being prepared for settlement. In some cases portions of properties purchased were unsuitable for ex-servicemen settlement and have been excluded from the area on hand for future settlement. The acquisition of additional suitable land by voluntary negotiation or under Part II of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act is continuing as speedily as circumstances permit.

SECTION XII.—HOUSING

(i) General

94. The housing of ex-servicemen continues to be one of the Board's major problems, and everything possible is being done to establish ex-servicemen in homes by way of allocation of State houses, financing the erection of new, and the purchase of existing dwellings. While a total of 7,138 ex-servicemen were so assisted during the year under review, there still remains a very large number of applicants and potential applicants for housing assistance.