

(c) Supply Situation

26. In the early part of the year the uncertain supply position tended to impede adherence to the progressive training curricula of the Rehabilitation Board's trade-training centres. A system of close liaison with the Ministry of Works resulted in a better distribution of materials and a consequent speedier completion of State house contracts undertaken by rehabilitation trainees. During the latter part of the year the availability of building-materials has improved, particularly in regard to timber-supplies, joinery, and roofing-materials. If this position is maintained it is anticipated that both training and the resultant completion of houses will be enabled to proceed with a minimum of interruption.

(d) Rural Housing

27. The national importance of building work associated with land development and the adverse effect of the current labour shortage on the erection of dwellings in rural areas is fully recognized by the Rehabilitation Board. Where Departments find it impossible to obtain the services of private contractors consideration is given to carrying out the work by Rehabilitation trade trainees. Some rural housing contracts have already been successfully completed under this scheme.

28. The Rehabilitation Board is also assisting to overcome the accommodation problem in rural areas by the release of competent trade trainees to work for private contractors who are unable to secure the necessary skilled labour for this class of work. A similar system is in operation for other works of major national importance, such as construction work at the Mangakino hydro-electric scheme. Provision is made for any trainee so released to return later to the training centre for the balance of his original training term if this is considered to be in his best interests.

(e) Tornado and Flood Damage Assistance

29. During the year a flood at Gisborne and a tornado at Hamilton caused damage in those towns. The rehabilitation trainees actively assisted in the measures taken to alleviate distress and to construct new dwellings for those who had the misfortune to lose their homes.

(f) Replacement of Trade Wastage

30. Without such a medium as the trade-training centres the building industry would be considerably handicapped if it is to accomplish a reasonable annual output commensurate with the national needs. The training centres for carpenters, painters, plasterers, bricklayers, and joiners for the twelve months ending 31st March, 1949, turned out 2,045 tradesmen and had 2,370 still undergoing training. The total number of trainees who have completed their training from the time the Department commenced the training centres until 31st March, 1949, are 3,351 carpenters, 24 joiners, 499 painters, 167 bricklayers, and 144 plasterers, making a total of 4,185, being equal to 22.9 per cent. of the total man-power in those trades as at 15th October, 1948, which is the latest date for which these figures are available. However, the man-power wastage in the occupations concerned has been as much as 14 per cent. in one year. It is important to note that there has been practically no growth in man-power in those trades since the 1911 census, when the total figures were 17,447, against the national survey figures of 15th October, 1948 showing a total of 18,293, while the population has risen 70 per cent. in the same period. But for the training centres' contribution, the man-power position in those trades would have been in a very much worse position than in 1911.