

The wage rates and conditions of employment are at present under consideration by Government, and, when determined, arrangements will be put in train for selecting suitable men for training on these blocks. The provision of accommodation and appointment of the necessary supervisors will shortly open the way to the selection of an increased number of trainees.

(13) HOUSING

(i) STATE RENTAL DWELLINGS

The Government, earlier in the war, provided that at least 25 per cent. of the State rental dwellings built by the Housing Department and transferred to the State Advances Corporation for letting were to be reserved for ex-servicemen. (N.B.—*Subsequently this proportion has been increased to 50 per cent.*)

As houses become available they are allocated, with particular preference to necessitous cases, as follows :—

- (a) Ex-servicemen from the present war who have returned from overseas after service with the Army, Navy, or Air Force.
- (b) Servicemen returned from overseas but not discharged—*e.g.*, retained by the Services as instructors, &c.
- (c) Widows of servicemen who are killed overseas or who die either overseas or subsequent to their return to New Zealand.
- (d) Wives of those servicemen who are prisoners of war.

To the 31st March, 1943, 573 units had been allotted to ex-servicemen, and there were at that date still 619 awaiting allocations (see Table VIII of the Appendix.)

It is unfortunate that, owing to the needs of defence work, the completion of the new houses has not been possible at the normal rate. Had this been so there is little doubt that the requirements of all servicemen would have been reasonably met as they arose. It is expected that housing operations will shortly be revived at full strength, and the outstanding claims should be satisfied without undue delay.

(ii) ERECTION OF DWELLINGS

As remarked earlier in this report, large-scale housing projects will be part of the reconstruction plans of the Government and the Board.

The Public Works and Housing Construction Departments provide the necessary organization to execute the large-scale project involved. Investigations have been made into the Dominion and overseas supply aspect, and the earmarking of the necessary imported materials has been arranged with the Ministry of Supply. It is obvious, also, that ex-servicemen trained as building tradesmen under the Board's trade training schemes will play an important part in the construction of the dwellings envisaged.

Pre-fabricated Dwelling Competition.—The key importance of speed and economy in housing construction has focused attention on the contribution that pre-fabrication methods could make to the programme. In this regard the Board conducted, during 1942, a competition in accordance with which prizes to the value of £800 were offered for the best plans submitted of dwellings of this type.

The result of this competition has been to provide some particularly valuable ideas in pre-fabricated construction, and already application of these ideas has been undertaken.

(iii) FURNITURE

The Board has recognized that the huge expansion of housing construction contemplated must be paralleled by a concurrent expansion in the manufacture of furniture.

In this field, also, a competition was organized by the Board, and, as in the case of pre-fabricated dwellings, valuable ideas for the manufacture of furniture intended for use in both pre-fabricated and ordinary type dwellings were submitted.

The training of ex-servicemen as furniture trades workers is, of course, also contemplated by the Board.

(14) THE DISABLED EX-SERVICEMAN

Sympathy for the seriously disabled ex-serviceman is not enough. Practical assistance to re-establish him in the life of the community repays only in slight measure the sacrifice he has made to preserve that community.

With this view uppermost, a number of important measures for the restoration to health and the establishment in suitable worthy occupations of the seriously disabled men from the present war has already been undertaken. These include occupational-therapy measures during in-patient treatment, social provision to assist in readjustment to civil life, specialized training, provision of light remedial work, and placement in long term congenial employment.

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

All cases of ex-servicemen who by reason of their disability or disabilities have at one stage or another presented a readjustment or placement problem have been regarded as "disability cases" by the Rehabilitation Service, and special efforts have been made to assist in the first place, and render secure in the second, their rehabilitation.

As at 31st March, 1943, the Rehabilitation Service had recorded with it, as having been "disability cases" at one stage or another, 1,886 returned ex-servicemen and 1,682 men who had seen service in New Zealand only. The cases of men who regained full employability after a normal convalescence are not included in these numbers. Among the 3,568 "disability cases" dealt with as at 31st March, there were 2,092 psychiatric cases, 222 amputees (including 66 digital only), 493 tuberculous cases, and 88 cases of multiple wounds.

PROGRESS IN REHABILITATION OF DISABLED MEN

Before proceeding to the specific measures taken to assist the rehabilitation of disabled men, it is desirable to give in general terms an indication of the progress which has been made in the re-establishment of the 3,568 "disability cases" alluded to above. Without minimizing the magnitude of the efforts yet requiring to be made in this field, the Board is of the opinion that so far gratifying results have attended its efforts and those of the various organizations which have co-operated with it on behalf of the disabled ex-serviceman.