

76. Already, as far as the transport industry is concerned including taxi businesses, goods and passenger road service businesses, and mail-contract businesses—a regulation has been gazetted instructing licensing authorities when issuing new licenses or transferring existing ones to extend special consideration to ex-servicemen applicants. A procedure has been evolved in accordance with which the consideration of applications from ex-servicemen by transport licensing authorities is assisted by recommendations in particular cases from local Rehabilitation Committees.

77. Of the industries directly concerning the Bureau of Industry steps to safeguard the interests of ex-servicemen similar to those taken under the transport licensing procedure have already been taken or are in the course of being taken in the cases of the fishing and motion-picture industries. As necessary it is hoped to make similar arrangements in the cases of the 30-odd remaining industries licensed under the Industrial Efficiency Act, and although it is recognized that it is not possible at this stage to secure the degree of provision for ex-servicemen that would have been possible had the procedures in question been introduced earlier much can still be done.

(iii) Domestic and Foreign Business Supplies

78. Ex-servicemen assisted by the Board to establish or re-establish themselves in businesses dependent on domestic and/or foreign supplies, as well as ex-servicemen established without assistance, are receiving a limited degree of preference in the allocation of stocks.

79. In so far as the allocation of domestic stocks is concerned, such assistance as is being made available is being voluntarily accorded by wholesale and manufacturing organizations on the representations of the supply authorities or the officers of the Rehabilitation Department, but the degree of co-operation forthcoming from these organizations is not regarded by the Board as being entirely satisfactory.

80. In the cases of ex-servicemen about to set up or recommence businesses handling imported stock lines an arrangement has been made with the Customs Department whereby, as far as is consistent with the general import licensing policy and the legitimate claims of existing firms trading in the lines concerned, special consideration in the granting of import licenses is accorded ex-servicemen provided their applications are supported by the appropriate Rehabilitation Committee.

(iv) Personal and Household Requirements

81. With the assistance of the Ministry of Supply the Board has been able to negotiate preference to ex-servicemen in the purchase of necessary personal and household goods such as clothing, blankets, linen, cutlery, building-materials, and a number of other lines indispensable to an ex-serviceman re-establishing or newly establishing a home. The Rationing Controller and his District Controllers have also co-operated gratifyingly in making necessary additional issues of appropriate coupons to purchase necessary goods.

(v) Release and Purchase of Army Vehicles

82. Five years of war, accompanied by an almost complete cessation of the importation of motor-vehicles, have greatly emphasized the difficulties faced by ex-servicemen, in common with civilians, in obtaining suitable motor-vehicles at reasonable prices. Accordingly the negotiation with the Ministry of Supply of an arrangement under which those ex-servicemen who are recommended by their Rehabilitation Committee receive a degree of priority in the release of Army vehicles and abatement of dealers' commission has been of distinct assistance to a number of ex-servicemen. Rehabilitation Committees support only those applications which are from ex-servicemen who require the vehicle for the successful pursuit of a business or calling which is such as to offer fair prospects of long-term rehabilitation, or from ex-servicemen who are so seriously disabled as to make the possession of a car indispensable. By this procedure the very limited number of suitable vehicles available for release is being used to the best advantage from the rehabilitation viewpoint.

(vi) Employment

83. Considerable interest has been shown by the organizations concerned and the public in proposals of various kinds designed to give ex-servicemen preference in employment opportunities. In particular, attention has centred on proposals for the reservation of suitable forms of light employment for disabled ex-servicemen.

84. Adequate worthwhile employment opportunities are available to all fit ex-servicemen, and this position for civilian as well as ex-servicemen workers is expected to endure in the favourable environment created by the full employment objective of the Organization for National Development and the Government. Furthermore, at the present time with the sponsoring of rehabilitation trade and occupational training schemes and the provision of generous educational facilities the question of employment preference for fit ex-servicemen is rendered largely academic.

85. Importance is, however, attached by the Board to the creation of special employment opportunities for semi-fit or partially-disabled ex-servicemen. In the appropriate placement of this class of ex-servicemen there is already arising one of the more difficult rehabilitation problems.

86. The means by which it is hoped to secure absorption in private employment for this class of ex-servicemen are discussed in the following Section of this report—*i.e.*, Employment. Preference to disabled servicemen is in the meantime being helpfully extended by many private employers on their own initiative, while, as far as the State Services are concerned, a definite policy of absorbing as many semi-fit and partially-disabled ex-servicemen as possible is being followed as a result of a Government decision made in response to representations of the Rehabilitation Board. Already a number of amputee and other seriously-disabled men has been absorbed into specially-selected positions in the State Services, where they are being given every encouragement and consideration.

(vii) Other Fields

87. It is inevitable that the question of particular arrangements for ex-servicemen will arise in a number of fields other than those already commented upon. The Board will endeavour to make such arrangements in these fields in the most effective and reasonable manner as the need arises. Emphasis is, however, placed on the desirability of keeping the question of preference for ex-servicemen in perspective with that arising from the needs of citizens as a whole.