

SECTION VI.—BUSINESS LOANS AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR EX-SERVICEMEN

(i) General

1. This section deals with facilities which the Board is able to offer to ex-servicemen engaged in or desirous of entering into business on their own account not only with respect to the actual purchase or establishment of their units, but also in regard to the obtaining of necessary licenses affecting operation and the maintenance of adequate supplies.

2. It is evident that a large number of ex-servicemen are attracted to the idea of owning their own businesses, but this aim can only be accomplished by either (a) the purchase of existing businesses, or (b) the establishment of new businesses. It is obvious that the latter alternative presents a comparatively limited scope, and the Board is therefore mainly confined to the first alternative.

3. As its general policy in these matters the Board is primarily concerned to ensure that the ex-serviceman applicant has the experience and training requisite to the successful sustained conduct of the business he intends to enter and that the prospects in that particular field and of the business in question as a unit therein are sufficiently attractive to offer a medium for the permanent rehabilitation of the ex-serviceman.

4. The Board is also anxious to see that, where national or local development creates business opportunities, suitably qualified ex-servicemen should be assisted to avail themselves of such openings.

(ii) The Transport Industry

1. The field of transport continues to prove most popular with ex-servicemen wishing to re-establish themselves in civil life by ownership of their own businesses. There are still many unsatisfied applicants for licenses, but for the period under review 797 licenses were obtained by ex-servicemen, compared with 334 for the year ending 31st March, 1945. The number of ex-servicemen settled in the industry considerably exceeds the number of licenses dealt with, as many licenses carry several vehicle authorities and thus provide for the settlement of a number of ex-servicemen under one license.

2. During the year the Transport Licensing Authorities carried out a review of licenses and, at the relative hearings, the Rehabilitation Department sought to have made available to ex-servicemen a number of licenses where it was considered that these had been aggregated as multiple licenses during the war years when the ex-servicemen were not in a position to compete.

3. Officers of the Rehabilitation Department who have attended all hearings of the Transport Licensing Authorities have materially assisted many ex-servicemen and, also, it is felt, considerably assisted the Authorities in arriving at decisions.

4. Attempts to obtain new taxi licenses for ex-servicemen have been sustained throughout the year, but so far Authorities have been reluctant to increase the number of licenses whilst conditions were abnormal. With the prospect of petrol and tire restrictions being modified a more accurate estimate of normal requirements in the taxi industry will possibly be available, and it is hoped that a number of new taxi licenses will then be granted to ex-servicemen.

5. The Board is particularly interested in the field of taxi operation, as it provides considerable scope for the settlement of men unsuited for more strenuous or indoor occupations by reason of war disabilities. While it is recognized that this is not the only field which may be looked to to absorb such men, it is, nevertheless, a very important one and must receive due attention.

6. A considerable number of ex-servicemen are endeavouring to obtain public-works' licenses, but up to the present the Public Works Department's plans have not reached the stage to warrant the issue of new public-works' licenses. Efforts have been made and will be continued to settle ex-servicemen on public-works' transport work