

(ii) Training Scheme

1. In general, the training scheme has continued to prove successful under practical test, and farmers have co-operated in taking trainees under subsidized engagement. The past year has seen a greater number of men placed with private farmers for training, but, consequent on the large number of men making application for farm settlement towards the latter part of the year, there has been a sharp increase in the number of men awaiting placement. This may be attributable to the large number of men returning within a comparatively short period, and also to the drought conditions which prevailed in a large portion of the North Island during the year. The Farms Advisory Committee is watching the position closely.

2. The Board's training farms—Homewood at Te Puke, and Wairarapa near Masterton—have continued to absorb their quota of trainees.

3. A large number of ex-servicemen continue to take courses at Massey Agricultural College at Palmerston North and Canterbury Agricultural College at Lincoln. The majority of these men have had a background of practical experience, and short courses at the colleges serve a very useful purpose in giving the men an insight into the most up-to-date farming methods. The men themselves have expressed their appreciation of the facilities made available by the colleges.

4. To 31st March, 1946, 3,250 men who had been declared eligible for immediate financial assistance under the Board's Land Settlement Scheme, but who were considered insufficiently experienced to farm on their own account, had been approved for training. In addition, approval has been given to train 76 men who, on service qualifications, are not at present eligible for settlement under the Board's rules of eligibility and priority, but whose cases possess merit and will be dealt with as soon as those entitled to first preference have been settled. In the meantime the Board is prepared to train these men so that they will be in a position to go ahead with their settlement as soon as their group can be assisted with loans. Seventy-one men who, on service, are not likely to qualify for loans but who were interested in accepting farm work as a livelihood or who expected to arrange private finance to purchase properties, had training approved for the purpose of qualifying them for this vocation.

5. Detailed figures of the training are given in Table XIII in the Appendix to this report.

(iii) Settlement

1. To date, 1,851 men have been established on their own farms, and it is anticipated that a number of subdivisions will be made available for selection during the next few months. It is confidently expected that the rate of settlement will be accelerated in the current year.

2. The Board has adhered to the policy of completing the minimum development requirements and necessary buildings before the men are established on their own account. In the meantime, and pending completion of the development programme to the satisfaction of the Land Settlement Committee, some of the subdivisions are worked on a wages basis. Under this scheme the successful ballotees, who are Grade "A" farmers, will be employed on the development work at a wage of £6 per week, less 10s. per week if a house is provided, on the understanding that they will have first option of taking over a defined section. The price of the sections is fixed with due regard to the productive value at the date of final allotment.

3. The supply of live-stock for new settlers has been kept under review, and the raising of suitable stock for ex-servicemen has been encouraged. The drought conditions during the year may have an effect on the provision of young stock next year, and an appeal has been made to farmers through the New Zealand Dairy Board to rear more calves during the coming season. The Lands and Survey Department has purchased, through herd improvement associations, a considerable number of "marked" calves during the past two seasons. This scheme will be continued and expanded until the needs of all ex-servicemen have been met.