

ORGANISATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A KORERO Report

WHEN a serviceman hands in his uniform and rummages round the wardrobe to see if his civvy suit still fits he is ready for rehabilitation. For some the main concern will be to get back to the old job; others will be seeking more congenial, more profitable, employment. Loans, farms, houses, furniture, study, trade training will each play their part in settling the serviceman back in Civvy Street, but the personal side of rehabilitation will remain paramount for the individual. He will be naturally and rightly concerned with finding his own niche in civilian life as speedily and smoothly as possible.

To help him find that niche the Rehabilitation Department was established. The success of its work depended on careful planning, so that, where possible, the personal problems of rehabilitation could be foreseen and solutions provided.

When a country steps out of battle-dress the situation is similar, though the problems are a thousand times more numerous and more complicated. The country itself needs rehabilitation, needs assistance in the change-over from war to peace. Not only a section of the community, but the nation as a whole must now be considered, and this means planning on a grand scale. To meet the situation England has established a Ministry of Reconstruction. So has Australia. The United States has a special Senate Committee concentrating on these problems, Canada has organized them under three Government Departments, and India, South Africa, Sweden, and other countries have all established departments to plan their post-war affairs. In New Zealand the Organization for National Development has been set up and given the job of co-ordinating our post-war plans.

The organization is one of "development" not "reconstruction," because, when compared with other countries, New Zealand is in a very fortunate position. We have no devastated cities and ravaged countrysides to rebuild and resettle. Nor have we huge armament industries to convert to peacetime uses. Our main post-war effort will be concentrated on the production of food, an effort intensified during the war which will need to be further intensified if we are to play our part in feeding starving Europe. But it is an effort geared with our normal economy. No upheaval of national life will be necessary for us to continue it. Thus the work of the Organization for National Development is one of development rather than of reconstruction; of addition to the present structure rather than restoration of a shattered one.

We also have a policy of economic stabilization, a Rehabilitation Department and a social security scheme, all of which are considered necessary adjuncts of national rehabilitation in countries now planning for the transition from war to peace.

Yet we are faced with problems which need careful consideration and co-ordinated planning if they are not to upset post-war conditions. As yet demobilization and rehabilitation of the forces has covered only some of the men and women involved. Full-scale demobilization has yet to begin. Then, with the termination of war contracts and the conversion of industry to peacetime production (both of which present their own problems), there will be the associated problem of rehabilitating war-workers thrown out of work by the re-employment of returning servicemen and the cutting-back of war production. Many women workers will also lose their war jobs.