

68. The return of small essential industry drafts from Fiji and Tonga in 1943 and the wholesale return of 3rd Division (Pacific) volunteers for essential industry in 1944 made the Department responsible to a far greater degree for the industrial absorption of ex-servicemen. Direction practice was, as might be expected, pursued as far as possible in such a way as to assist the long-term rehabilitation of ex-servicemen as well as the immediate national interest.

69. Towards the end of 1944 discussions between the Rehabilitation and National Service Departments were commenced on the subject of the employment of ex-servicemen. These have resulted in an arrangement under which the National Service Department will resume the industrial placement of all fit ex-servicemen requiring assistance to find suitable work as from June, 1945. This development, combining with the trend towards relaxation of man-power controls, promises a reorganization of departmental procedure to enable it to perform the functions of a peacetime free Employment Service.

(v) Relaxation of Man-power Control

70. It is not denied that wartime man-power control has been an unpalatable necessity. From the outset the Department has earnestly adhered to two canons of control—viz., to take no greater powers than were necessary; and to relinquish the use of powers wherever and whenever their relinquishment was consistent with the overriding man-power policy.

71. A measure of the fidelity with which these canons have been observed is afforded by the single fact that of 169,000 directions issued to persons by man-power Officers only 4,900, or 2.9 per cent. have been appealed against, and of those appealed against, only 40.8 per cent. have been upset by Industrial Man-power Appeal Committees.

72. Considerable latitude has throughout also been accorded marginal workers, married women workers of indifferent health, and also returned ex-servicemen who were liable to direction.

73. With the European war obviously drawing to its close by March, 1945, careful preliminary consideration had already been given to the effects of a cessation of hostilities in Europe on the Dominion's man-power position. Attention was being given to three main aspects—the part of the National Service Department would be called upon to play in the placement of returning servicemen in suitable employment; the extent to which certain industries (particularly the production of food and those industries directly related to rehabilitation) would require continuing assistance; and the stages by which it would be possible to relax wartime man-power controls while meeting the requirements of vital industries and maintaining the war effort in the Pacific. In addition, the Department was also giving attention to the long-range adjustments necessary to secure the durable resumption of normal employment conditions.

(NOTE.—In June, 1945, the Minister of National Service announced the first classes of workers from whom control was to be removed, and also expressed the Government's intention of abolishing man-power control generally at the earliest possible date. The Minister announced the release from control of (a) wives of returned ex-servicemen desiring to establish a home; (b) married women forty years of age or more; (c) young persons under eighteen years of age; and (d) the widows of deceased servicemen of the present war.)

SECTION III.—ADMINISTRATION

(i) Administrative Developments

74. During the year it was found necessary to establish a District Man-power Office at Taumarunui to relieve the Hamilton and New Plymouth district offices of a portion of the considerable volume of work which had hitherto fallen to them.

75. Towards the end of 1944 a streamlining of the Armed Forces Appeal Board organizations was undertaken, and the staffs for the most part were amalgamated with the staffs of the District Man-power Officers. This resulted in economizing of typing and clerical staffs, particularly in consideration of the falling-off in Appeal Board activity up to December of 1944. Thereafter the renewed Appeal Board activity in connection with the comb-out of Category "A" men held under appeal in essential industry again increased the pressure of Appeal Board work.

76. The establishment of the Rehabilitation Department in November, 1943, and the transfer *en bloc* of the staff of the Rehabilitation Division of the National Service Department to the new Rehabilitation Department as from 1st April, 1944, involved the Staff Section of the National Service Department, Head Office, in considerable work, while the separation of rehabilitation from national service papers on personal files has been a protracted and heavy duty of the Records staff of the Department. In addition to this, the National Service Department has maintained close co-operation with the Rehabilitation Department and wherever possible has assisted it with typing, clerical, and investigatory services to enable it to develop its procedure.

77. In common with other Departments, the Department in February of this year launched the personnel-training scheme devised by the Public Service Commissioner. This is an extension of the scheme which was under consideration before the war, and will, it is hoped, provide a solution to the training and adjustment problems of ex-servicemen as well as junior civilian appointees.