



POST-WAR RUGBY

Parallel To 1918

IN view of the proposed tour of the All Blacks to South Africa in the immediate years following the cessation of hostilities, the transformation of Rugby football in New Zealand from a wartime to peacetime basis will provide a major and urgent problem.

It is interesting to recall that in 1921, within 18 months of the cessation of hostilities in the Great War, New Zealand was visited by the Springboks and within the following three years the All Blacks had undertaken visits to Australia and Great Britain.

Thus it will be seen that football was well on its feet within a matter of months after the war, while records and performances have shown that the standard of play was comparable with that at any stage in New Zealand history.

A similar position rules with regard to this war and within a few years of the Armistice, the New Zealanders are scheduled to visit South Africa, while a tour of the Dominion by a British team will follow almost immediately. In the meantime, it is fully anticipated that the interchange of visits every three years between Australia and New Zealand will be resumed.

During the present war, Rugby activities have gravitated towards the four main centres and areas in which military camps have been situated. Demobilisation and decentralisation must go hand in hand if Rugby is rapidly to regain pre-war status in provincial unions.

In the past few years many promising players have come to light and it seems likely that trial matches, which will be required for the purpose of selecting the

All Blacks, will provide the basis for a return to pre-war provincial standards.

Army life has provided for many players, an incentive for Rugby which would normally have been restricted owing to occupational and transport difficulties and it is these additional players, particularly in the sub-unions, who are going to assist the raising of the standard in their particular areas.

Prospects for post-war Rugby are bright. New Zealand teams in the British Isles and in the Middle East theatre of operations have shown that the Dominion still maintains its high place in international competition. Much good material is offering and providing the New Zealand Rugby Union accomplishes the necessary organisation, there is no reason to doubt that the standard of the success achieved will be comparable with those of 1905, 1924 and 1928.

The Ranfurly Shield, with a widening of scope for challenge matches, must of necessity continue to provide the ideal stimulus for the major Rugby provinces. Within the provinces themselves the sub-unions are of the greatest import and while these and school football are fostered and encouraged to the fullest possible degree, Rugby in the Dominion should continue to flourish and fulfill every expectation and performance so much demanded these days of a national game.