

The subsidised training with private farmers is facilitated by the co-operation of the Returned Services Association and other organisations in nominating farmers who are both willing and suitable to engage one or more trainees. These farmers are approved by the local Farming Sub-Committee, and trainees work under a wage and subsidy scale.

On Government training farms the training of "B" and "C" class applicants follows the same procedure. They are employed for as long as necessary and are paid by the board on a rising scale. The number who can be trained on the two farms at present operating—Homewood Farm, Te Puke and the Wairarapa Training Farm—is, however, limited, and the emphasis must be on training on private and State-owned properties.

Full-time tuition at Lincoln and Massey Colleges is provided where approved, the board paying trainees and meeting college fees and expenses. Only men with satisfactory practical experience are approved for courses at these colleges.

Of vital interest to the prospective farmers among servicemen is how the farm training and settlement schemes are functioning. Here it is stressed once more that the policy in operation prohibits indiscriminate settling of soldiers on a mass-production basis and the fact that cases are considered individually and an effort made to suit individual requirements, causes unavoidable delay in the process. The various committees proceed cautiously, in the soldiers' own interests, but this caution pays dividends in the confidence with which a trainee will tackle his vocation, knowing he is well equipped for the task.

The chief difficulty encountered by the board, however, is that of finding and acquiring suitable land or properties. The acreage of good land available is at present far short of what is

required. Inferior land can eventually be developed up to the standard set by the board, but until this development is completed there will be an inevitable bottle-neck in settlement.

A review of the position up to July 31, 1945, shows that to that date 346 ex-servicemen had completed their farm training courses and 333 were undergoing training with rehabilitation assistance. Of these 252 were working with private employers, 62 attending Massey and Lincoln Colleges and 19 were on rehabilitation farms.

Dairy farming has proved by far the most popular—particularly in the North Island. Of the 3,721 so far graded for settlement, 1,637 have been for dairy farming, 732 for sheep, 514 for mixed, 271 for sheep and agriculture, 89 for horticulture and market, 76 for poultry, 69 for fruit farming, 28 for tobacco and hop growing, 23 for agriculture and 22 for beekeeping. Only six sought a grading for pig farming while 53 were interested in taking over "farmlets".

Already 1044 have been assisted financially on to farms of their own, 763 having been settled since the introduction of the grading system. Of 2473 "A" grade applicants, 1710 still await settlement.

A total of 137,910 acres has been purchased under the provision of the Small Farms Act, 1922-23, for the establishment of ex-servicemen and 129 properties capable of subdivision into 186 units have been acquired under Section 51 of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act. The board is continuing to place ex-servicemen on wages improving Crown Lands with a view to a lease being taken out when the improvements have been effected.

Every month sees an increase in the amount of land obtained, and numbers of ex-servicemen assist the department by finding suitable economic units in which they are assisted to acquire the freehold.