

No. 27.

New Zealand, No. 178.

SIR,—

Government House, Wellington, 3rd September, 1915.

I have the honour to forward to you the accompanying copy of a memorandum which has been sent to me for my information by the Attorney-General relative to the new Department, called the "Discharged Soldiers' Information Department," which has been created by the Government of New Zealand for the purpose of providing employment for, and safeguarding the interests of, New Zealand soldiers returning to this Dominion.

I have, &c.,

LIVERPOOL,

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, P.C., &c.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Governor.

Enclosure.

MEMORANDUM RE THE RETURNED SOLDIERS INQUIRY OFFICE.

Discharged Soldiers' Information Department, Head Office,

Aitken Street, Wellington, N.Z., 1st September, 1915.

To begin with, it should be distinctly understood that the new Department has nothing whatever to do with the soldier who comes back to New Zealand until he has been discharged by the Defence Department. There must be no misapprehension about this.

The Defence authorities and the Public Health Department are the custodians of the returned soldier until he gets his formal official release from the Army.

At this point, when the man has ceased to be a soldier and has become a civilian, the new Department will come in, and it will then become the duty of its officers to take charge of every soldier who may require help to get employment, or who may want information which may be of assistance to him. The Department will endeavour to make certain that no discharged soldier suffers through want of attention. The instructions are that no man is to be missed.

Thanks to the valuable help we are receiving from some of the older officers of the Government Insurance Department, who have volunteered to devote a portion of their spare time to the requirements of the Government outside their own Department, our preliminary plans are rapidly developing. An office, called the Discharged Soldiers Inquiry Office, has been opened in Aitken Street, and Mr. Samson, of the Government Life Insurance Department, has been appointed to manage it. He will be assisted in the preliminary stages by a record clerk and typiste. Returned soldiers in need of advice or help should communicate with the office, and persons who are able to offer employment of any kind to soldiers who have returned to New Zealand will render an immense service to the office if they will send particulars of any work available to Mr. Samson.

Having established a base in Aitken Street, we are now attempting to prepare a complete register of the men who have returned from service abroad. As the Defence authorities do not appear to have a record of all the men who have returned up to date by various boats, we will have some difficulty in preparing an accurate register of returned soldiers now in New Zealand. But the Returned Soldiers Department will take steps to ensure that a full and accurate list of all men who return in the future will be compiled. We propose to visit the returning ships and to complete our records before the soldier lands. The register will contain the particulars shown on the card annexed and marked "A."

In the course of time we hope to have the following card registers in the office :—

- (1.) A register of all men who left New Zealand with the Expeditionary Forces since the outbreak of war.
- (2.) A register of soldiers who have returned.
- (3.) A register of returned men who have been assisted and with whom the Department has finished.

It will be seen that when these registers are completed the office machinery will go through the following evolutions when a soldier arrives in New Zealand. His card will be looked up in Register No. 1, it will be transferred to Register No. 2, and it will remain there until employment is found for him or until he receives appropriate assistance. Then, our duty to the man having ended, the card will be transferred to Register No. 3.

In addition to the registers mentioned above we will, of course, be in possession of a proper record of all offers of employment or assistance that are made by persons who desire to help the returned soldier.

Although our duty to the man does not commence until his career as a soldier is ended by his discharge, the Department will endeavour to keep in touch with him after his arrival, but without in any way trenching upon the provinces of the Defence Department or the Public Health Department. We propose to hand to each soldier upon his return a printed card