

Government as to the best manner of dealing with the question, and their representations have received every consideration.

The Department of Agriculture itself is offering every facility on its experimental farms for the training of returned soldiers who wish to take up farms and have not much knowledge of agriculture or farm work. So far the response has been small, but the Department in every way is endeavouring to meet the requirements of the soldiers in this respect, and arrangements have been made by which all applications will receive immediate and careful consideration. In the South Island the Canterbury Patriotic Society arranged with the Government to take over the Homebrook Estate, in the Southbridge district, for utilization as a training-farm for returned soldiers, but as soldiers did not take advantage of the opportunity the society were reluctantly compelled to abandon the idea.

The position is, therefore, that provision has been and will continue to be made by the Government for the training of returned soldiers, in order to afford them an opportunity of becoming sufficiently experienced to work to the best advantage any land they may take up.

PAGE 59.

115. *Apparently little justification for the formation of the Discharged Soldiers' Information and Employment Department.*

This is a question for the New Zealand Government.

PAGE 59.

116. *The Defence Department should have an Advisory Engineer Officer.*

*Vide 7. Page 7.*

In addition to the valuable assistance afforded us by the Public Works Department, the Engineer Works officers in the training-camps are always available to give expert advice when required. An Engineer officer at General Headquarters is not at present justified.

PAGE 60.

- 116A. *Territorial officers called into camp for whom there are no vacancies in commissioned rank in Expeditionary Force.*

1. In the latter part of 1917 a reduction of Reinforcements produced conditions under which more Territorial officers were available than could be efficiently absorbed in Reinforcements.

2. The Defence Department took the stand that the surplus officers were liable for service under the Military Service Act in the ranks of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

3. The officers in question disputed the attitude of the Defence Department, and decided to contest the legality of the ruling. This action resulted in considerable delay.

4. A final decision was obtained from the Supreme Court in August upholding the original attitude taken by the Defence Department.

5. Of the officers who were held in the training-class in Trentham Camp pending the decision of the Supreme Court the majority were absorbed in existing vacancies in the Reinforcement drafts.

6. The present policy of the Department is to take all Territorial officers into camp in a training-class as non-commissioned officers. On completion of the course of training, which lasts some three months, the most suitable will be selected to fill vacancies existing in the Reinforcement drafts.

7. Present arrangements are that out of twenty-seven Infantry officers required per draft, seventeen are to be furnished from the United Kingdom. The remaining ten vacancies will be filled by Territorial officers. This will admit of 130 officers, in addition to the twenty-nine officers who have already been absorbed this month since receipt of the decision of the Supreme Court, being granted commissions in the Expeditionary Force Reinforcements during the next twelve months. No officers will, however, proceed from New Zealand in higher rank than 2nd Lieutenant.

PAGE 61.

117. *Whilst Lieut.-Colonel Cumming receives military pay at a rate double his civil salary, other Territorial Force officers have some cause for grievance.*

Lieut.-Colonel Cumming was specially returned to New Zealand by orders of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Expeditionary Force for employment on the Instructional Staff. Whilst in the United Kingdom he was sent to several schools to learn the latest methods of training. Lieut.-Colonel Cumming has performed his duties in New Zealand in a most efficient manner. As soon as a sufficiently qualified officer becomes available to replace him Lieut.-Colonel Cumming will be set free to proceed on active service.

PAGE 62.

118. *Excessive use of telegrams should be rigorously cut down; urgent telegrams restricted.*

Telegrams are restricted as far as possible, and further reductions will be made as far as efficiency will permit.

PAGE 62.

119. *Desirable to institute a check on Defence Department telegrams by Post and Telegraph Department.*

The Post and Telegraph Department was approached with a view to ascertaining whether a practical check could be effected. The Secretary, Post and Telegraph Department, in commenting on this paragraph of the Commission's Report, states as follows:—

"I beg to state that it is not proposed to suggest the imposition of any check by this Department on telegrams, as it is considered that it would be quite beyond the functions of the Department to subject telegrams handed in by your Department to review or criticism."