

SESSION II.  
1918.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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## DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

(MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS OF THE).

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*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.*

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Discharged Soldiers' Information Department, Wellington, 31st October, 1918.

RECOGNIZING the importance of the reabsorption of our soldiers into the industrial life of the community as soon as possible after they have been discharged from further military service, the Government established this Department in August, 1915, and in the memorandum of instructions drawn up by Cabinet for the guidance of the new Department it was specially pointed out that "*no man was to be missed.*"

Accordingly an officer of the Discharged Soldiers' Information Department meets every transport arriving in New Zealand with returned soldiers, and obtains in the case of each man the information necessary for the purposes of its register. A large part of the information is compiled on the ship during the voyage to New Zealand, but additional information as regards the man's medical condition on arrival, the address to which he is going, the period of leave granted, or the hospital or convalescent home to which he is being removed, is obtained by our officer immediately after the man has been examined by the Medical Board. At the same time each man is given a card (Appendix I) setting out the objects for which the Department was established, and inviting him to communicate with the Officer in Charge if in need of information. The man is also given a leaflet on the subject of land-settlement.

### THE DEPARTMENT'S REGISTER.

The Department's register is written up from the information obtained on the transport, and forms a history card for each man (Appendix II). This card is kept under constant observation, and remains unfiled until the case has been satisfactorily disposed of.

### THE VOLUNTARY STAFF.

The Department has been fortunate in having the assistance of a number of the senior officers of the Government Insurance Department, who in their evenings have compiled practically the whole of the Department's register to date. For a period of over three years they have been ready to assist in this work at any time called on, frequently at short notice, and as the register now contains 24,000 cards it will be seen that it is a work of some magnitude. At the time they write up the cards these gentlemen also schedule particulars of the cases to the Department's forty Committees throughout the Dominion, so that they may have information regarding the men returning to their respective districts. I would take this opportunity of thanking these officers of the Government Insurance Department for this very valuable patriotic work that they have so efficiently performed.

### THE PERSONAL INTERVIEW.

A special feature of the Department's work is the personal interview, when the soldier is handed a leaflet setting out briefly the functions of the Department (Appendix IV). Shortly before a man is discharged the Department receives advice thereof from the Defence Department, and a Government officer is requested to interview the returned soldier and furnish a report on the form shown in Appendix III. The questions on the form have been framed with a view to ascertaining the needs and wishes of the soldier, and on receipt thereof the Head Office is able to see in what direction the man desires assistance. A number, of course, already have businesses or farms to return to, or intend