

keep these losses down to a minimum. A classified list compiled on the 20th August shows that 1,000 loans for businesses have been granted or approved, ranging in value from £45 to £300, and that approximately £100,000 has been advanced or approved for this purpose.

District Board and Local Committees.—The Chairman and members of the Auckland District Board and members of the Local Committees are working with enthusiasm. A considerable amount of voluntary labour is done by these gentlemen on behalf of soldiers. In committee applicants for loans for businesses get much valuable advice from successful business men, who are freely giving their time outside of Board meetings. As the result of close co-operation between the district staff and Board and Head Office staff and Ministerial Board it is possible, even with the delayed railway service, to complete a business transaction in a fortnight from the date on which the application is made, and of this time it may be noted six days is consumed in the carriage of file to and from Wellington. A gratifying feature in connection with the District Board's operations during the month was the appointment of a member of the executive of the Auckland Provincial Patriotic and War Relief Association to a seat on the Board. Twenty honorary local committees are at work in the district, and there is now a general uniformity in their handling of cases. From time to time fresh instructions have been sent from the District Office until a satisfactory system has been devised. By this system most causes of delay have been remedied, and cases are coming forward in better order for presentation to the District Board. All country correspondence is answered on the day it is received, and cheques are posted on the day the requisitions arrive. It has obviously been difficult to organize a large and scattered district such as Auckland while an accumulation of work was being overcome, but this has been done. I have visited every Local Committee and am thus conversant with the needs of each town and in touch with the local members and officers. I do not expect any serious repatriation problems to arise in the Auckland District in the future.

General.—The work of the Auckland Office is proceeding generally on satisfactory lines. New problems confront the staff daily, but usually there is no lack of initiative or ability to solve these problems as they arise. The organization is fairly complete, and delays in handling cases, whether from city or country are rare. The members of the staff exhibit a commendable keenness to meet the needs of their former comrades. Repatriation in Auckland is not passive, it is aggressive in quality. We are working in harmony with the District Board, Local Committees, Returned Soldiers' Association, Employers Association, Federation of Labour, and public criticism is practically nil.

FRANK H. BURBUSH,
District Repatriation Officer, Auckland.

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE DISTRICT REPATRIATION OFFICER, WELLINGTON, AS AT 20TH AUGUST, 1919.

Business Loans.—The class of proposition coming before the Board has improved a great deal recently, and the businesses seem to be in the main quite successful. There are three propositions which have given great trouble and have required careful nursing—(a) Fishing-launch, (b) motor-van, (c) taxi-car. These three cases it is hoped will now prove paying propositions. Some other taxi-cars have given trouble, but a satisfactory feature is that the applicants always come straight to the office when things go wrong, thus giving us an opportunity of helping them. One failure has been recorded, due to lack of business knowledge—this was a country case. The assets have been sold, and a net loss of £12 is anticipated. In this case the applicant brought in his accounts and stated the position quite frankly; he will be given a clean discharge from his liability.

Repayments now amount to some £700 per month, and with few exceptions are regular. The Board insists on applicants repaying as quickly as possible, the idea being an enforced saving and enabling the Department to help more men with a given amount of capital. In July, for example, the repayments would suffice to start two or three men in business. The Board also is endeavouring to assist those with the greatest claim first, and not to allow a flood of applicants with no claim of loss through service to close the field to those with a stronger claim not yet returned.

Training.—So far as can be found there is only one disabled man in Wellington who is not either in a suitable job or being trained for one. The man in question is satisfied at present—he has been assisted with furniture and will be permanently fixed up when he is ready. His income at present from pension and earnings is £5 10s. per week.

Special classes are at work at the technical school, and there appears to be general satisfaction with these arrangements, which are augmented by private schools and coaches.

Furniture Loans.—These are being applied for in great numbers, and in most cases they are repaid over a period of two years. An exhaustive inspection disclosed a satisfactory state of affairs as regards price and quality, and the various firms have arranged to give special discounts. Bills of sale are taken to prevent misguided men obtaining loans and then selling their furniture for very low prices, with the effect of great loss of money to the State and no permanent benefit to the men. Repayments are regular and satisfactory.

Tools of Trade.—Applications under this head are fairly numerous and repayments are satisfactory.

Employment.—As a general rule a man applying for employment is placed within one week, otherwise he is allowed sustenance. Only four cases of sustenance for this office were recorded last month. The country districts were higher, but it is anticipated that during the summer the position will improve. Two points should be noticed in this connection: (a) In many cases it is impossible to offer a man employment which is commensurate with his pre-war position plus the increases which should be available to meet the different conditions now—e.g., increased cost of