

III.—LAND-SETTLEMENT.

(A.) SCHEMES.

Canada.

The Canadian Government offer to ex-service men from other parts of the Empire the facilities afforded to their own ex-service men for settlement on the land under the auspices of the Soldier Settlement Board. Over twenty-five thousand Canadian ex-soldiers have already been placed on the land in the Dominion by the Board. The number of British ex-service men so placed is 266.

The Soldier Settlement Act enables the Board to grant loans to settlers for the following purposes :—

- (1.) To purchase land up to 4,500 dollars.
- (2.) For stock and equipment up to 2,000 dollars.
- (3.) For permanent improvements up to 1,000 dollars.

Loans are repayable in twenty-five consecutive annual instalments at 5 per cent. interest amortized.

His Majesty's Government are considering the possibility of formulating a scheme, in co-operation with the Dominion Government under the Empire Settlement Act, in order to enable larger numbers of British ex-service men to take advantage of this offer.

In present circumstances the Canadian Government are not in a position to extend the privileges of the Soldier Settlement Act to men who have not served with the Forces.

Australia.

Schemes for land-settlement in the States of New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia have already been concluded under the Empire Settlement Act. A summary of these schemes is contained in Appendix II. It is understood that the Australian authorities have under consideration schemes of development involving openings for land-settlement which will be brought forward at an early date.

New Zealand.

The Dominion Government, as indicated in a preceding paragraph, have undertaken to place on farms under supervision a number of public-school boys with a view to their settlement upon the land under favourable conditions, but so far have been unable to formulate further definite land-settlement proposals.

Union of South Africa.

The Union Government, whilst stressing the fact that the limited field for white labour in South Africa precludes co-operation on their part on the lines contemplated by the other Dominions, are negotiating an agreement to enable a number of selected settlers (fixed provisionally at 500 per annum for three years) who possess not less than £500 of their own to take advantage of the land-settlement facilities afforded by the existing South African legislation.

Rhodesia.

The representative of Rhodesia expressed regret that, in view of the fact that the new Government had come into existence as recently as the 1st October last, he was unable at present to submit proposals for co-operation under the Empire Settlement Act. In view, however, of the fact that the Government of Rhodesia is now in full possession of 50,000,000 acres of unalienated land, it seemed probable that that Government would in due course desire to co-operate in schemes under the Empire Settlement Act.

(B.) GROUP SETTLEMENT.

The importance as well as the difficulties of land settlement and development have been referred to in an earlier paragraph of this report, and it need only be added that the Committee hope that development and settlement may be stimulated by means of "group settlement." A system of placing new settlers upon the land in groups is already in operation in Western Australia. The committee regard the results as hopeful, and it has been agreed that experiments should be undertaken with a view to the adoption of the system in other suitable parts of the Empire, and its extension on the following lines. The object of the extended system would be to select in the United Kingdom groups of families not drawn as at present from various parts of the country, but connected by some bond of sympathy, such as residence in the same town or district, or membership of the same organization, and to settle these groups under skilled supervision upon a suitable tract of land overseas. The groups would not form isolated communities, but would be intermingled, *ab initio*, with the existing population, and the area chosen would be sufficiently extensive to allow of the settlement from time to time of further groups from the same source and similarly connected. This form of settlement should not be confused with community settlement in the sense of settlement upon a communal basis. At the same time, every advantage would be taken of the principle of co-operation in respect both of purchasing equipment, &c., and of marketing produce. The Committee are of opinion that such schemes, especially if linked up with some local organization in the Mother-country would be of great assistance in the recruiting of large numbers of suitable settlers.

Both the Canadian and Australian representatives have agreed to discuss with the Provincial and State Governments the inauguration of some such schemes in favourable areas in their respective Dominions.

(C.) TRAINING.

The Committee have come to the conclusion that such training (apart from any brief period of testing in order to ensure suitability) as may be required by persons in the United Kingdom who contemplate settlement upon the land overseas should be undertaken overseas and not in this country. It was admitted that a brief period of testing in this country might conduce to the elimination of unfit persons, but the Committee felt that if such an experiment were to be tried the cost could not be shared by the oversea Governments. The Canadian representative intimated, however, that his Government would be prepared to supply free of charge instructors familiar with Canadian conditions.