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R.S.A. ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

(Continued from page 3.)

8.—That the Group Settlement scheme as discussed and approved at last Conference be again put before Parliament, with the addition that preference be given discharged soldiers in New Zealand to emigrants abroad for purchase of that settlement.

9.—That the Government be urged to remit the stamp duty on transfers to soldiers who obtain loans under the D.S.S. Act.

10.—That the N.Z.R.S.A. views with regret that the Government has not given effect to the remit with regard to the supply of fencing wire and building material at cost price to soldier settlers, the same remit to be urged this year.

11.—That the Government be urged to bring down legislation forthwith with a view of obtaining an immediate classification of lands and in the meantime to provide a further special grant for improvement, including buildings for the Waireri Block, and the blocks similarly situated.

12.—That Conference strongly urge that the district secretaries be supplied by the Lands Department with a list of all Government leases falling due within the next three years.

13.—That the maximum sum advanced by the Government for the purpose of felling bush on soldiers' sections should be increased in all cases to cover the actual cost of felling the bush, the maximum advance of £2 10s not being sufficient to cover the cost of felling bush in a good many cases.

14.—That the R.S.A. should be represented on all Land Boards, and that Land Boards should be empowered to appoint local sub-committees to deal with returned soldiers' applications for land.

(b)—That in order to expedite business before the Lands Department, Land Boards should have power to make final decisions without reference to the Minister except in cases of difficulty.

(c)—That the attention of Headquarters Lands Committee be called to the ineffectiveness of the Lands Purchase Boards throughout the country, and that the Minister of Lands be requested to make a clear statement regarding their duties and powers.

T.B. MEN.

The position of T.B. men is one that has never been really understood by the majority of the returned soldiers, and at this Annual Conference we had a report submitted from T.B. men for consideration.

The position of the T.B. man is such that he is placed in entirely different circumstances from any others affected by war service, and it was felt that the treatment of the T.B. patient should be given special consideration.

MEDICAL.

The following resolutions dealing with this subject were therefore adopted by Conference:—

1.—That T.B. men on being discharged from sanatoria be provided by the Defence Department with permanently suitable shelters, properly furnished with bedding, etc.

2.—That where a patient owns a house, having a verandah, the Defence Department defray the cost of having the verandah suitably glassed in, in lieu of a shelter and furnished as a permanent shelter.

3.—That compulsory examination of every T.B. out-patient, and discharged men, be made every six months (not for pension) by a specialist, or by the specialist who treated the man's case, and the Defence Department be responsible for transport to the nearest specialist.

4.—That it be a strong recommendation to the D.G.M. to send a chest expert throughout New Zealand to examine immediately all chest cases from the N.Z. E.F.

5.—That it be a recommendation to the D.G.M.S. that the present system of incurables in sanatoria in separate shelters be substituted by a ward system.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

1.—That steps be immediately taken to have the Pukeora farm at the sanatorium made into a training ground for T.B. men's future occupations.

2.—That vocational training be taken from the Defence Department and placed in the hands of the Repatriation Department.

PENSIONS.

1.—That where a specialist certified a man as incurable he shall be granted a permanently full pension for life.

2.—That all T.B. men on being discharged from sanatoria receive a full and supplementary pension for a period of 12 months, and that they be reviewed for pension annually, and that the specialist's recommendation on re-examination for pension, be adhered to, and not that of the Pensions Board.

REPATRIATION.

1.—That immediately on discharge the patient should be able to start on his occupation, and that the Repatriation Department must ensure there is no delay.

2.—That the Government be asked to appoint four T.B. men to the After Care Branch, one to each centre, and that a T.B. man of sanatorium experience be appointed to supervise the work of the After Care Branch from Repatriation headquarters.

3.—That the Repatriation Department be asked to immediately make Taulerini-kau, if found suitable a competent training ground for T.B. men who intend to follow the occupations taught there.

4.—That men remain in training until certified as competent by their specialist instructors.

5.—That the Repatriation Department should confer with the Lands Department and should find a man an acreage suitable to the applicant and subject to the specialist's approval, and further that a suitable home be erected for him.

6.—That in the event of a recurrence of a man's trouble after having been successfully repatriated, it should be an obligation of the Repatriation Department to provide a suitable substitute from the Repatriation Training Farm for the purpose of carrying on that man's business while detained in a sanatorium.

MISCELLANEOUS.

1.—That T.B. patients retain their overcoats until discharged.

MEDICAL.

The following recommendations made by the Medical Committee were discussed and adopted:—

1.—That it be a recommendation to Conference that where there are soldiers in hospitals in their districts under the H. and C.A. Boards, that the R.S.A. of that district should nominate a man to stand for election on the Board and assist the candidate in his election.

2.—That this Conference considers that wives and widowed mothers of returned soldiers, who have become of unsound mind, and those who are totally or permanently incapacitated as a result of their war service should be eligible for the benefits of the D.S.S. Act.

3.—That all patients travelling to and from hospitals are to be granted first-class accommodation, and that all patients travelling on the Main Trunk Line shall be in future provided with sleeping berths.

4.—That any soldier who has been discharged for refusing inoculation, or refused any benefits under the D.S.S. Act or Repatriation Act, and any such soldier who is receiving any benefits therefrom be deprived of the same.

REPATRIATION.

The convenor of this committee, Mr C. W. Batten, in bringing down his report, referred to the pledge given by Mr Massey to the last Conference, in which Mr Massey stated that every opportunity would be given to returned soldiers to take advantage of the benefits of land settlement and repatriation, before such acts would be rendered inoperative.

In view of the temporary suspension of the D.S.S. Act Conference passed the following resolution:—

That the Association ask the Government for a pledge that land settlement and repatriation benefits generally, shall not be rendered inoperative until such time as every soldier has had ample opportunity to train himself or to otherwise arrange his affairs, in order to allow him to take full advantage of the said benefits.

UNEMPLOYED SUSTENANCE.

Regarding the question of sustenance grants for men out of employment, Conference recommend that the scale be raised as follows:—Man and wife 55s; with one child, 63s; with two children, 70s; three children, 75s; four children, 80s.

APPRENTICES.

The whole matter of the sustenance scheme for married apprentices came under the consideration of Conference, and it was agreed that the sustenance scale for unemployment should apply in this case, instead of the flat rate of £3 5s.

Regarding subsidised workers, Conference approved of the principle that the subsidised workers' wages should be brought up to £3 10s per week for single men and £4 for married men, as they were of opinion that the present allowance is quite inadequate in view of the high cost of living.

Another resolution of vital importance to subsidised men was as follows:—

That in the event of renewal of subsidy for a further period beyond the usual 12 months, the subsidy should be based on the starting wage and not on the wage the trainee is earning at the time of renewal, providing that the wages with subsidy shall not exceed the maximum provided.

The resolution carried at last Conference regarding the purchase and building of urban and suburban properties for soldiers' dwellings be administered by the Repatriation Department was reviewed.

PROTECTION OF BUSINESSES.

The Conference unanimously resolved that the regulations for the protection of soldiers' businesses administered during the war by the Efficiency Board be revived for the protection of businesses established with the assistance of the Repatriation Department, and that the Repatriation Department be charged with the administration of such regulations.

IMMIGRATION.

Many resolutions were tabled in connection with this matter and after a very full debate in which the attention was drawn to the large influx of Hindus and Chinese to this country, it was decided that it be an instruction to all affiliated associations to endeavour to obtain public support for the purpose of preventing further immigrants of this class.

It was also decided to make an appeal to Parliament to have the immigration laws so amended as to prevent these undesirable classes of emigrants entering into this country. It was pointed out during the discussion that many returned soldiers who had commenced business with or without the aid of the Repatriation Department had been forced to close down through unrestricted competition by Hindus and Chinese. It was further resolved that the policy of promoting and encouraging the immigration of ex-imperial soldiers' wives with young children, or any other persons who are likely to become a charge on the taxpayers of the Dominion, or upon the patriotic societies' funds, be strongly objected to.

"QUICK MARCH."

The report of the committee of "Quick March" was submitted by Mr J. D. Harper, convenor, and several proposals were put forward for the purpose of improving the circulation, and altering the organisation of the paper. Owing to the development of the paper, Conference recommended the separation of the literary and business departments, so that the editor would occupy his whole time on the literary work of the paper.

The administration of the advertising and publishing departments and financial matters generally, to be placed in the hands of an experienced manager, directly responsible to the board of management. Conference further authorised the board of management to formulate a scheme by which the subscription to "Quick March," should, if practicable be an integral part of the annual subscription to the N.Z. R.S.A. on the understanding that such subscription should be increased to include the paper. A report of this scheme should be available for the next Annual Conference of the N.Z.R.S.A.

PAY, PENSIONS, AND ALLOWANCES.

The whole matter of pensions underwent a thorough revision, and the Conference recommended that the schedule of pensions for specific injuries of the War Pensions Act, 1917, and the second schedule thereto, be regraded by the addition of plus percentages up to 175 per centum, (that is £3 10s per week), and the total percentage upon minimum pensions for total permanent disablement. Supplementary pensions and attendant's pension to be over and above such rate, and that the dependants' pension be assessed at present rates, and that the third schedule of the War Pensions Act, 1917, be regraded on account of certain anomalies existing therein.

That the War Pensions Appeal Board consist of three members, one to be an S.M., who shall be chairman, and two registered medical practitioners, one of them to be nominated by the N.Z.R.S.A. and that they should sit in the four military centres, such members to hold office for a term of one year.

It was further agreed, that where possible only doctors who had been on service, be examining doctors under the Pensions Act, and that this be put into operation immediately.

A remit from the Hawera Association was carried unanimously after slight amendment and reads as follows:—

Where a discharged soldier dies, as a result of disability incurred while on service, and leaves a widow, such widow shall be entitled to a pension for herself and any children of the marriage, irrespective of whether the soldier was engaged or married to such a person prior to enlistment.

It was agreed that returned soldiers' pensions be free of income tax.

Regarding pay, the Invercargill remit, to make Defence Department bonuses applicable to members on active service abroad, as well as to those remaining in New Zealand, was carried unanimously.

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