

PAGE 56.

108. *Unfortunate situation created by position of officers unfit for military service yet not sufficiently unfit to be a charge on the Superannuation Fund.*

Every endeavour has been made to overcome the difficulty, and alternative schemes are now being investigated with a view to an amendment of the Act.

PAGE 57.

109. *No necessity to put clerks into uniform at the expense of the public.*

*Vide 141. Page 64.*

Home-service clerks in Wellington are drilled in a soldier's "duties and obligations," which work is undertaken outside the ordinary office hours. The value of a good clerk may not depend on his "top button" being open, but discipline for civil staff is equally necessary, and a civilian clerk would in few offices be allowed to work without his collar and tie, although such might not interfere with his work.

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110. *Many men drawing military pay for clerical work in excess of what they could earn in civil life.*

It is considered that as a general rule the pay of each member of the staff is well earned, and that there are more members underpaid than overpaid for the work they do. The Commission appear to overlook the fact that temporary work of any nature is usually paid at a higher rate than permanent work, and Defence Department soldier-clerks are liable to discharge at any time, and can certainly not look to a permanent job. Owing to the war, experienced clerks can obtain high wages, particularly those willing to temporarily fill the places of employees on military service who have been promised a return to their old positions upon discharge.

The case specified of a soldier earning £3 per week before the war and now drawing £297 as a Regimental Sergeant-Major, with wife and three children, is probably unique. To hold this rank the individual specified must be doing important work and have proved himself a capable administrator. He is probably doing work which a civilian clerk would expect to obtain about £300 per annum for if he is in charge of a large section.

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110A. *Returned soldiers employed at original rank.*

Non-commissioned officers returned from the war are not taken on home service at their Expeditionary Force (foreign service) rank; they enlist as privates, and only receive promotion according to the importance of the work done.

PAGE 58.

111. *"Pay for rank" produces many anomalies.*

There must be some basis for pay, and "pay for rank" is the present basis. This does not apply in the cases of officers on loan from the Imperial Army under special contract. The whole question is being carefully considered.

PAGE 58.

112. *Desirable to reduce the uniform issue to discharged soldiers.*

An amended scale of issue has been approved, and will shortly be published in General Orders.

PAGE 59.

113. *Soldiers should be returned to civil life as early as possible.*

*Vide 44. Page 28.*

Every endeavour is made to discharge soldiers so that they may be returned to civil life as quickly as possible.

PAGE 59.

114. *Before putting soldiers on the land their fitness for the work should be tested.*

This matter was referred to the Department of Lands and Survey, and the Under-Secretary, after a consultation with the Director-General of Agriculture, under whose control are the State farms at which returned soldiers obtain training, has replied as follows:—

#### SETTLEMENT OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS UNDER THE DISCHARGED SOLDIERS SETTLEMENT ACT, 1915.

Each applicant is required to fill in a form giving particulars of his farming experience and capabilities, together with a statement of his capital and other assets he may have at his command for the working of the land applied for. This application is considered by the Land Board of the district, which carefully scrutinizes his qualifications, and endeavours to ensure that land suitable to his farming experience, &c., may be allotted to him. The lack of money does not bar a man from obtaining land, as the Government may advance up to £750 to enable him to effect improvements on his land, erect a house, secure stock, farming implements, &c., (under departmental supervision). Provision is also made by which the Government may either advance money on mortgage to the soldier who desires to obtain freehold property, or may purchase the property itself and allot it to him. It is, however, essential that the applicant shall be able to work the land in a proper manner.

The Annual Report on Discharged Soldiers Settlement for the year 1917, particularly paras. 19, 20, 21, 29, and 30, shows in detail the view of the Government on this matter.

#### GENERAL QUESTION OF SETTLEMENT OF RETURNED SOLDIERS ON THE LAND.

This has on several occasions received consideration by the Board of Agriculture, which has also conferred with the National Efficiency Board on the subject. The joint Boards have made representations to the