

No. 18.

Audit Office, 8th May, 1902.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

Pension to the Widow of the late Lieut.-Colonel F. W. Francis.

THE Controller and Auditor-General, adverting to the minute of the 26th ultimo in which he, on receiving the Warrant by which the Governor, under section 9 of "The Public Revenues Acts Amendment Act, 1900," intimated that the Audit Office would pass the necessary expenditure, begs to submit that he had not then seen the Solicitor-General's opinion of the 20th March, of which the following is an extract:—

"On examining the full file (which was not before me when my previous opinion was given) I find that Colonel Francis was first examined by a Medical Board under the Act on or about the 27th February, 1901. The report itself is not on the file, but it is referred to in a memorandum of that date from Major Owen to the Minister, stating that the Medical Board had reported that Colonel Francis would be fit to resume Volunteer duty within two months. Assuming the report to be in the usual form, it would follow that he was 'first certified to be ill' within the meaning of the subsection a little more than one month before he died.

"For these reasons I am of opinion that the pension may be granted."

It was after that opinion that the Governor issued the Warrant by which he decided "that the period of six months referred to is to be computed from the date upon which the Medical Board under the said Act first certifies the officer to be ill, and that inasmuch as he died within six months of that date the pension may be granted to Mrs. Francis"; but the date within six months of which the Warrant states that the officer died is the date when the officer was examined by the Board, whose report is stated by the Solicitor-General to have been "not on the file."

The Audit Office now finds the report on the file. It is dated the 21st February, 1901; and from the correspondence, of which a copy is appended, that report does not appear to be the report of a Medical Board under the Act. Nor is it in the form of the report of the 16th September, 1901, of the Board which was appointed under the Act.

In the circumstances the Controller and Auditor-General ventures to refer the matter again to the Colonial Treasurer, in case the Administration may consider it desirable, in the light of the facts that have come to light since the Governor's Warrant was issued, to revise what has been done.

J. K. WARBURTON,
Controller and Auditor-General.

No. 19.

COPY OF APPENDED CORRESPONDENCE.

A.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

Audit Office, 1st May, 1902.

Pension to Mrs. Francis, Widow of late Colonel F. W. Francis.

THE Controller and Auditor-General would be obliged by the Minister causing the Audit Office to be furnished as soon as possible with the information how the Medical Board was constituted which on the 21st February, 1901, made the report of which a copy is appended.

A verbal application was made by the Audit Office to the Defence Department yesterday for such information, and as the vouchers for payment of the pension are delayed for a reply the Controller and Auditor-General makes the present urgent application to the Minister.

J. K. WARBURTON,
Controller and Auditor-General.

B.

Christchurch, 21st February, 1901.

WE, the undersigned, duly constituted a Medical Board for the purpose of reporting upon the condition of Colonel Frederick Wyatt Francis, who returned from the South African War on the 31st January, 1901, beg to state that we have this day carefully examined him, and are of opinion that he will be unfit to return to his regiment in South Africa for at least twelve months. Though we consider him unfitted to undergo the special hardships inseparable from active service, it is our opinion that he will be capable of undertaking Volunteer duties in this colony within two months.

WALTER THOMAS, Surgeon-Major,
Chairman.
GEOFFREY C. CLAYTON, Surgeon-Captain.
RICHD. W. ANDERSON, Surgeon-Captain.

C.

Medical Board on late Lieut.-Colonel Francis, on the 21st February, 1901.

THE Audit Department is asking to be furnished as soon as possible with information as to how the Medical Board was constituted which on the 21st February, 1901, reported on his then state of health. The report was signed by Surgeon-Major Thomas and Surgeon-Captains Clayton and Anderson.

There is no information whatever on the matter in this office. I shall be glad if you will furnish me with the information as soon as possible.

ARTHUR P. DOUGLAS, U.-Secy.
3rd May, 1902.

The Commandant, Headquarter Office, Buckle Street.