

ticular case the opinions of the Permanent Head of the Department and the Commissioners coincided, but the Board of Appeal differed, and, notwithstanding that the decision of the Board of Appeal is final, reasons are refused.

ACCOMMODATION.

34. In the Second Report attention was directed by the Office Accommodation Board to the restricted life of the main Government Buildings, Wellington, and the necessity which must almost immediately arise to provide accommodation not only for the Departments in the present main Government Buildings, but also for Departments at present in rented premises in Wellington (the cost of which amounts at the present time to £7,500 per annum). The matter is one requiring early attention. Under present conditions efficient management and supervision is rendered most difficult.

35. It is hoped that when this matter is seriously taken up the somewhat haphazard arrangements of the past will be abandoned in favour of a more modern system, particularly in regard to the provision of large rooms for the whole departmental staffs instead of a multitude of small apartments. Difficulty of effective control and supervision, and want of economy in administration, results from badly designed office buildings.

MINIMUM WAGE.

36. No provision was made in the Public Service Act for the payment of a minimum wage to married men. Under the Post Office Regulations, which were automatically continued under section 34 of the Public Service Act, a minimum salary of £140 per annum had been paid, and at the suggestion of the Commissioners Government agreed to provide funds for the same payment to officers of other Departments. Even before the war this minimum salary was considered to be a bare one, but it afforded relief in many directions.

37. Last year Government supplemented all salaries of married men up to £315 per annum by a war bonus of £15 for the year, but this is a temporary measure which should not delay consideration of a higher minimum wage for married men, and it is hoped that Government will see its way to fix a more liberal amount than £140 by an amendment of the Public Service Act. It is also suggested that attention be given at the same time to providing a higher minimum wage for single men of twenty-one years of age and over than the present minimum of £100, which is fixed by Act.

38. The Commissioners have no power to consider the payment of special salaries on account of marital conditions or age, their duty being to fix salaries according to the value of the work performed. The question is one which presents difficulties, and these difficulties are accentuated by the fact that many men performing clerical work in the Defence Department are regarded as soldiers on home service to whose wives and children are granted separation allowances, the total of which is greater or less according to the number of children.

RETURNED SOLDIERS.

39. Preference continues to be given to returned soldiers for positions in the Public Service for which they are considered to be suitable, and in cases in which permanent employment has been available medical examinations are paid for by Government. Up to the present there would not appear to be much difficulty in the way of returned soldiers obtaining employment outside the Public Service, as it is found that many of the men are not available when offered positions, or do not care to accept them. This no doubt is accounted for by the general shortage of labour and the fact that many of the men go back to their old employment.

40. It has not yet been necessary to consider what relaxation may be permitted in the conditions of medical certificates of returned soldiers seeking employment in the Public Service. The Commissioners, while not desiring to insist on too strict a medical certificate, cannot make any regulation in view of possible unforeseen charges on the Superannuation Fund. Government, it