

We believe that it will be necessary in some industries and lines of investigation for definite evidence to be obtained under oath, and for this purpose we recommend that we should have powers conferred upon us which we believe can only be provided by the constitution of the Board as a Royal Commission; and we suggest that if this is decided to be the best method of carrying out the objects sought we should be appointed as a Royal Commission, but that the terms of appointment should grant to each individual member of the Board powers of examination and inquiry under oath, so that it will not be necessary to make such investigations sitting together as a Board.

With regard to the items set out on pages 4 to 6 inclusive of your memorandum, we agree that those items numbered 1 to 17, with the Appendices C and D, set out matters which should receive our attention, and that they should be included in the powers conferred upon us. All these matters are of great national interest; many of the suggestions will involve a restriction of personal freedom of action, and it will be our duty to so far as possible educate those who are affected by the proposals to the necessity of making sacrifices in the national interest.

We are of opinion that some of these duties are much more urgent than others, and we believe that one of the most important and pressing duties which will be cast upon us will be to arrive at a decision as to what are essential and what are non-essential industries and occupations in relation to (a) military requirements, (b) civil and other national necessities, and (c) the general mercantile trade of the Dominion. It is important that we should include in our investigations the problems of transit and the desirableness of reducing the amount of waste energy which at present is being expended in various directions.

We are satisfied that we ought to investigate at as early a period as possible the question as to how far men's labour can be, or ought to be, replaced or diluted by the employment of women. We believe it is essential that a national sentiment should be created, that idleness in any form is discreditable to the individual, being a national and economic waste.

With regard to the suggestions made in the memorandum as to the constitution of Advisory Councils and Committees and the appointment of Supervisors and Industrial Committees, we are of opinion that the scheme proposed would be unwieldly, slow of action, and unnecessarily costly. We would prefer to ascertain by practical trial whether the suggestion as above made for voluntary expert assistance will meet all that is required. In the event that it should be found that it does not do so, then we will be prepared at a later date to submit a scheme to the Government for consideration.

We would like, before expressing any definite opinion upon the question of the appointment or duties of soldiers' Trustees, Managers for soldiers' farms, and other businesses to have time to gather more direct information on this matter, including a definite personal contact with the difficulties as they may exist in our respective districts. We are of opinion that some system is necessary, and should be brought into operation as speedily as possible, and we think that general powers of investigation should be given to us.

We realize that there will be a difficulty in settling a sufficient number of returned soldiers on the land, and are of opinion that one of the most important directions in which we can investigate will be in connection with the provision of a scheme by which country work can be made more generally attractive than it has been in the past, especially to married men.

The Government should place at our disposal all information and assistance which can be obtained through or from the various Departments. We request that instructions be given to the branch offices of all Government Departments to furnish direct to each member of the Board such information and assistance as he may require in connection with his district. Our object in making this somewhat unusual request is to expedite inquiries, which in many instances will relate to matters of a purely local character. We deem it most important that information concerning what is being done in other countries should be obtained for us as speedily as possible, especially with regard to post-war preparation.

We believe that an important branch of our investigations will be to ascertain whether there are any, and, if so, what, industries that can be started before or after the conclusion of the war, in order to absorb returning labour, and in so doing that every effort should be made to conserve the associations of comradeship which have proved so attractive to the men while on active service, and which if continued would tend to produce good citizenship.

We are of opinion that it is the duty of the State to provide, through national organization, facilities for the placing of men and women in employments and occupations for which they are best fitted. We are afraid that there is a risk that returned soldiers may drift into occupations far below their true standard of fitness and efficiency, with a consequent loss both to the State and to the individual.

We are satisfied that intermittent labour is harmful to the individual and a loss to the country. It will be part of our duty to ascertain how far it is unavoidable and how far permanence of employment can be arranged for.

With regard to the reference to scientific research which was made in your memorandum, and in respect to the reports on the co-ordination of science and industry, presented by the President of the New Zealand Institute and dated the 31st January, 1917, we emphatically support the necessity for scientific investigation and research. We deem it most desirable that university professors and other persons skilled in scientific investigation should be brought into touch with the practical difficulties met with in the various industries. We are of opinion that in the course of our investigations these difficulties must claim our attention, and we therefore submit that it is desirable that not only should our members be members of the local investigation societies or organizations in each of our districts, but also that our Chairman should be a member of the central Board of Scientific Research if such is constituted. We certainly think that any