

in the "Under action" section of the register. Except in the case of systematic neglect to reply to our communications *action is not abandoned until employment has been obtained or we are definitely advised that assistance is not required.*

Amongst the residue of the reports are found a certain number which contain inquiries on the subject of land-settlement. In these cases we immediately forward to the soldier the special instructions which have been prepared by the Lands Department on the subject, and we simultaneously advise the Lands Department of the particulars of the inquiry which has been received. As I have already mentioned, the whole scheme of land-settlement for soldiers is entirely in the hands of the Lands Department, and we have no responsibility in respect thereto beyond furnishing inquirers with the Lands Department's leaflet, and forwarding the inquiries to that Department itself. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same remarks apply to pensions.

EMPLOYMENT OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND PRIVATE EMPLOYERS.— PREFERENCE FOR SOLDIERS IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

The remaining reports consist of applications for employment or inquiries in respect thereto.

The following is a brief account of the various agencies we employ in seeking out employment and the office methods which we follow in connection therewith.

At the outset of our work we made a special appeal to the Local Authorities, the Patriotic Societies, Farmers' Unions, &c., asking them to use their influence collectively and individually in securing preference of employment for returned soldiers. Our appeal met generally with a sympathetic response, and in many cases material assistance has been rendered.

Large numbers of private employers have approached us from time to time with offers of employment, and in many cases a generous disposition has been shown to make substantial concessions in favour of returned soldiers. A considerable number of men have been found employment through this agency.

The Government has instructed the Labour Department that returned soldiers are to have the preference for all employment offering which they are qualified to undertake, and the Secretary of the Labour Department has instructed the local Labour Offices to render all possible assistance to the Discharged Soldiers' Employment Committees throughout the Dominion.

Government has instructed the Departments controlling employment in the various branches of the Public Service to give preference wherever possible to returned members of the Expeditionary Forces. In conformity with that instruction large numbers of soldiers have been appointed to vacancies in the Departments under the control of the Public Service Commissioner, and the assistance given in that direction has been a great help to the Discharged Soldiers' Information Department in carrying out its duties. The same remarks apply to the Railway Department; but it should be remembered that this Department is taking back into its employ the members of its own staff who have returned from the war, and this absorbs a large number of positions in which partially disabled men can be employed, and is consequently a material assistance to the work of the Discharged Soldiers' Information Department.

LOCAL COMMITTEES.

It was early recognized that direct local co-operation would have to be enlisted if full advantage was to be derived from the widespread desire of the people to assist in any work having for its object the benefit of our soldiers. This desire is naturally most actively awakened on behalf of neighbours and fellow-townsmen, whilst intimate knowledge of local resources and conditions specially qualifies those living in the district to assist in the best manner in the duty of finding employment for men residing in the same neighbourhood and needing that form of assistance. With the object of securing the advantages mentioned, Local Committees have been formed to represent the Department at various centres throughout the Dominion, and almost without exception the results have been in the highest degree satisfactory, and reflect the greatest credit upon those who devote so much time and trouble to a very arduous duty. The Department is now represented in no less than thirty-nine centres, the full list of which is given in Appendix IV. These Committees are ordinarily sub-committees of the Local Patriotic Societies, or, at any rate, are in intimate relationship therewith. In one or two of the largest centres where considerable clerical and other expenses are involved, financial assistance on a small scale is given by the Department, but in the great majority of instances the work is performed entirely gratuitously.

When the report of the interviewing officer shows that returned soldiers outside the Wellington District are ready for and desirous of employment, the Local Committee of the district in which the man resides is at once supplied with full particulars, and the man himself is directed to place himself in communication with the Committee. The case then remains charged in the Department's registers against the Committee, and at short intervals reminders, if necessary, are sent inquiring what is being done, and advising any apparently suitable vacancies which have come to the Department's knowledge. Finally, the matter is not allowed to rest until work has been found, or the man has systematically neglected to reply to repeated communications or offers of employment which have been made to him. Failures of this kind are not numerous, but a certain number arise, and no doubt in most instances are accounted for by men going away to work which they have obtained independently of the Department and failing to notify us of the fact.

The Department makes a practice of communicating to all Committees all offers of employment which reach its hands, and in the case of new offers it makes an immediate inspection of the cases charged against the Committee of the district in which the work is available, and if necessary wires to the Committee, drawing attention to the names of any men who appear *prima facie* suitable.