

1919.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPATRIATION DEPARTMENT

(MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS OF THE).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

Repatriation Department, Wellington.

No problem is of such supreme national importance to-day as the reabsorption into the industrial life of the community of our soldiers who have won for us such a glorious peace.

This problem is, in New Zealand, the special concern of the "Repatriation Department," a Department of State set up under the provisions of the Repatriation Act, 1918, whose aim is to help every discharged soldier requiring assistance to secure for himself a position in the community at least as good as that relinquished by him when he joined the colours.

REPATRIATION BOARD.

The controlling body is the "Repatriation Board," comprising the following Ministers of the Crown: The Hon. W. H. Herries (Minister of Railways), Chairman; the Hon. W. D. S. MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture); the Hon. J. A. Hanan (Minister of Education); and the Hon. D. H. Guthrie (Minister of Lands). The Secretary to the Board is Mr. J. D. Gray.

The decision to have a Repatriation Board instead of a single Minister did not fail to excite a good deal of criticism, the main argument against the Board of Ministers being that delay in the settlement of questions would be inevitable. Six months' experience, however, has shown this fear to be groundless. The Chairmen of the various District Boards and Committees have expressed their appreciation of the expeditious handling of all questions by the Board. In this connection it is interesting to note that our great sister Dominion of Canada (recognized as being in the forefront as regards repatriation), after two years' experience with a single Minister in Charge, has followed the example of New Zealand, and has set up a Repatriation Committee comprising six Ministers of the Crown.

ORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department is Mr. J. R. Samson, who is stationed in Wellington as "Director of Repatriation."

In order to ensure the expeditious handling of all soldiers' applications for assistance the Board has adopted a policy of decentralization, and for this purpose the Dominion has been divided into four districts, known as the Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago Districts.

In each of the four centres, District Repatriation Boards, composed of prominent citizens nominated by such bodies as the Returned Soldiers' Association, the National Efficiency Board, the labour organizations, and the industrial, commercial, and patriotic interests of the community have been established, and departmental offices have been opened and staffed with discharged soldiers under the control of District Repatriation Officers at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin.

Repatriation Committees on a similar basis have been formed in the chief provincial towns, and offices with paid staffs are established in the following centres:—

Hamilton	Napier	Wanganui	Nelson	Timaru
Rotorua	Hastings	Palmerston North	Blenheim	Oamaru
Gisborne	New Plymouth	Masterton	Greymouth	Invercargill.