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security at current rates. Solicitors
under Discharged Soldiers' Settlement
Act.

"The Digger."

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1920.

THE R.S.A.

General Russell's speech at the annual
re-union of returned Soldiers at Master-
ton will provide food for thought for
all returned men throughout the Domin-
ion. The speech was temperate, and
characterised by a clearness of vision
which cannot fail to arrest the attention
of every thoughtful man and woman who
pays any attention to the welfare of this
Dominion. We are living in an age when
phrases such as "principles of Democ-
racy," "Government for and by the
people," have become synonymous with
camouflage and hypocrisy. When Lloyd
George declared in 1914 "That the war
has raised us to an elevation where we
can see the things that matter for a na-
tion," we believed it, but how soon did we
forget? Anyone who has followed the
activities of General Russell since his re-
turn from the front will readily perceive
that the present day political activity of
sham and humbug is alien to his charac-
ter. As the General has stated in his
speech, that the work of the R.S.A. is
necessarily growing less, it is evident
that some machinery should be created
which will act as a union among returned
men for all time. Even if the R.S.A.
went out of existence to-morrow, it is
highly desirable that we should have the
requisite machinery whereby the com-
radeship attained in war may be per-
petuated in peace. Returned soldiers
must take an active part in every sphere
of life within this Dominion, and as the
General states, "there must be a real
desire for peace and tolerance." Soldiers
have learnt the lesson of selfishness and
self-sacrifice. They have been brought
face to face with "reality," and these
valuable lessons must never be lost sight
of amongst the present day hypocritical
activities as associated with the Domin-
ion's political life. Possibly the
majority of soldiers will agree that after
the work of the R.S.A. has been practi-
cally completed it would make an effective
piece of political machinery. So far, very

few soldiers have taken part in politics,
but they could do much in that direc-
tion. They have a clearer view of what is
right and wrong for a world seething
with discontent. It is true that there
must be discipline in life. The successes
at the front were won by obedience and
it must be so in civilian life. We must
stand for law and order, and lose no op-
portunity of directing our services in the
interests of the country. It is time the
old order changed and yielded place to
the new, and a step in the right direction
would be a "New Zealand Party" with
General Russell as leader.

DIGGERS' LETTER BOX.

**THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
SOUTHLAND ELECTRIC POWER
BOARD.**

Sir and Gentlemen,—At your last meet-
ing there was quite a tendency to be more
critical than in the past amongst members
of the Board, and we believe that in the
future there will be a greater expression
of opinion. There is still room for im-
provement and we want to refer to a pre-
vious meeting. At this meeting two mem-
bers of the Board were remarkable for
their quietness. At lunch time these
two members had enough to say to meet
the whole requirements of the Board. The
fact that these members were so silent
during important considerations by the
Board does not appeal to us. It takes
men of courage to freely express them-
selves in what they believe to be right.
Further it is only fair to the Chairman
and in the interests of efficiency that
there should be criticism at the meetings
of the Board. And now, Mr Chairman,
we wish to draw your attention to the
manner in which you introduced our ap-
plication to see the Board's minutes.
When we wrote to the Board, our ob-
ject was to be courteous, and your re-
mark that "the Editor of 'The Digger'
could not have the right to see the min-
utes in his capacity as editor," was at
least out of place, and we assure you
that we are as fully aware of the pro-
visions of Section 33, Sub-Section 4, as
the Auditor-General is of Section 34, both
of which are quoted for public informa-
tion:

Section 33, Sub-Section 4.—The minute-
book of the Board shall be kept in the
office of the Board, and shall be open
for inspection, without fee, during all
office hours, by any member of the
Board or by any creditor or elector of
the district.

Section 34.—The Board may, out of its
funds, pay to members such reasonable
remuneration for their services and trav-
elling expenses as may be prescribed.
The receipt of any payment under this
section shall not constitute a cause of
forfeiture of office under section fifteen
hereof.

Regarding the question of legal expenses,
we think that there is no reason why the
Board should go into committee on this
matter. Every time it comes before the
Board it is immediately passed into com-
mittee, and it is time so much committee
work was dispensed with. Legal expenses
have to be paid, and the item must be
shown on the balance-sheet. Legal ex-
penses in connection with the scheme up
to the 31st March, 1920, is £648 14s 8d,
as shown on the balance-sheet, and the
remaining items of £380 and one hundred
guineas must be shown also, and there
is nothing to be gained by considering
negotiations in committee. At this stage
we would point out that the above in-
formation was not dealt with in committee.
The question of amending the Act seems
to be a very simple matter, and it seems
as easy to effect this as for a debating
society to alter its rules. This is the
second time the Act has been amended
(if this Bill goes through) and this
being necessary in the early stages of the
scheme, we may reasonably wonder what
will happen as the scheme advances and
fresh difficulties arise. Further, these
amendments incur heavy legal expenses.
Readers of this correspondence will re-
member that in a previous issue we
stated "that the Board existed as a piece
of machinery to satisfy Legislative re-
quirements." In our last issue we took
exception to the Chairman letting a con-
tract which the Board had decided should
be advertised again. This tender was
£1300 above the Engineer's estimate, and
within an hour after the Board meeting
it was signed up at the Engineer's esti-
mate. The Chairman has explained to us
that apart from being Chairman of the
Board he is also managing director and
thus considers his action justifiable. In
the face of this it is possibly true. Now,
the plain facts are that if the Chairman
in his capacity of managing director can
veto a decision of the Board, where does
the Board come in? Of what use are
they, except to pass accounts, peruse cor-
respondence and so forth. Really, Gen-
tlemen, it isn't worth a guinea a day and
expenses. In other words "the Board

is a piece of machinery to satisfy Legisla-
tive requirements." Then there is the re-
lationship of the Construction Depart-
ment and the Board's executive officer,
however, as the Chairman is already try-
ing to adjust matters we refrain from
comment in the meantime. Likewise the
question of finance.—Editor "Digger."

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MINIS-
TER OF LANDS.**

Sir,—Since you have occupied the posi-
tion of Minister of Lands it may safely
be said that the only time we have had
an exhibition of your candour was when
you stated that the operation of the Dis-
charged Soldiers Settlement Act was a
failure. We have noticed through the
press that you are "discouraging" the
purchase of houses under the provisions
of the act. In view of the fact that you
have made no statement about rendering
certain provisions of the Act ineffective,
we would like some explanation of the
circular which has been sent to the Land
Boards, the details of which have not
yet appeared in the daily press. And
you still use the word "discouraging."
This circular provides that no advances
be made for houses except in very special
circumstances. We are all aware of what
"special circumstances" mean when ut-
tered by a Cabinet Minister. Mortgages
are not to be discharged unless rate of
interest paid by the soldiers is exorbitant.
Soldiers cannot get farms under your
latest instructions. It would look much
better if you made a definite statement
and let returned men know where they
stand. At the previous suspension of the
Act, the soldiers complained and to
smooth things over you advised Land
Boards to stack the applications in their
office. In this case they are being stack-
ed in Wellington. Soldiers are still tour-
ing the country in search of farms and
these instructions should be made public,
and not a secret communication to the
Board. We have at least forestalled you in
this case and think it would be much
nicer for a Cabinet Minister to be candid
enough to make it public.—Ed. "Digger."

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—There is one aspect of the Electri-
fication Scheme which has not yet been
discussed. The Power Board intends to
take over the Invercargill Power plant
and I think I saw it mentioned somewhere
that they expected to do this for about
£40,000. I believe this plant has cost
Invercargill ratepayers more than double
the above amount. Invercargill has not
got a true representative in Mr Rodger
for the scheme must come first with him.
It therefore behoves the ratepayers to
wake up our city fathers, so that when
the time comes for negotiations we will
get the full value of our plant. This
should be based on replacement cost
and not on the actual cost. No agreement
to hand over the plant should be made
until the Monowai scheme is actually
completed and the true cost of the current
ascertained. It may be that we can gen-
erate as cheaply as the hydro scheme. It
should be remembered that even if we
sell the Power Station we will not get
the whole of the capital back. It will
be necessary to transform the high pres-
sure current from the Waikivi station
down to the town pressure and this will
necessitate a costly plant. The charges
on this plant will have to be added to
the cost price of the current at the Wai-
kivi station. Then again the question
will arise as to the advisability of sell-
ing a town reserve to an outside corpora-
tion. Although vbqk currentmfwy pp
tion. Altogether there are quite a crop
of interesting points to be discussed be-
fore we hand ourselves over to the Board
and I trust the whole matter will be ven-
tilated in the columns of "The Digger"
as it seems to be the only live paper in
electrical matters.—I am, etc.,
RATEPAYER.

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—Having challenged Scotch Terrier
two weeks ago, I was disappointed to
read you were not stake holders, but at
the same time I fully expected to see
"Scotch Terrier" come up to scratch and
prove his published remarks about me and
my dogs, but as it stands it seems as
though he is not the sport and critic he
publishes himself to be, namely "Scotch
Terrier." In my opinion he has used
the wrong nom-de-plume, because the
Scotch terrier like the Irish terrier for
gameness will usually stand up to any-
thing twice its size. As he is now satis-
fied that his statements were an injus-
tice to me, I trust he will show his man-
liness by apologising through your valu-
able paper in which you have allowed
me to correct the already published state-
ments made by "Scotch Terrier." I leave
it to your readers to sum up the past.—
I am, etc.,
J. DOE.

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—In "The Digger" of the 24th
are some interesting letters, both in the
week's and those held over from the
week's issue. In your answers to cor-
respondence under your Editorial, cor-
respondence began "Dogmatism" and
have taken, when you seem to have been
stopped by a quotation used by Sir Wil-
liam Crookes "To stop short in any re-
search that bids fair to widen the gates
to science." Sir William did not stop
short even though he was unable to un-
ravel the tangled skein of Spiritualism
and was deceived, when Florence Cook
acting as medium in Sir William's labo-
ratory to demonstrate full form of man-
ifestation in Spiritualism. When King
appeared, Sir William in writing says,
Katie was a head taller than Mr. Cook
and a big woman in company with "John"
in his reply to "Jacques" "Jacques" right
by supplying the word "to an alarming extent
on fraudulent performances," showing that
seances are frauds, some are not so. We
any one accuse Sir William as being an
accomplice in the deception? for he was
the deceived, neither was Miss Cook a
deceiver, but she being possessed by an
evil spirit was used to deceive Sir Wil-
liam because he had disobeyed the in-
junction not to seek after communion with
the dead. That quotation is correct, "an
existing thing perishes but only changes
form." When we cease to breathe, we
stop to take in energy and through the
use of energy we decompose. Would you
let me know what he understands by in-
spiration? and what he would consider
sufficient proof that the Bible as it is
given in the original language was the
inspired word of God? and I will give
him that proof. The party who were
Rule Britannia, I consider, was inspired
I am, etc.,
GAVIN BRIGHTON.

MATAURA ISLAND NOTES.

The fine weather of last week brought
on Monday afternoon, when a steady rain
set in and continued throughout the
night.

The County Council have dumped sev-
eral large concrete pipes at a culvert of
the Titiroa-Mataura Island road, and
it is to be hoped the surfaceman will en-
deavour to renew this dangerous culvert
before an accident occurs.

The Island factory is in full swing
once more, and by all appearances should
have a record season. Owing to the high
price of butter-fat the farmers have been
tempted to milk a few extra cows this
season. Messrs Duthie Bros. of the
"Bend" have increased their herd from 85
to 100, while many others are milking
from 50 up to 120 cows.

Several sporting parties visited the Ma-
taura river during the week, when some
good catches of whitebait were secured.

A card tournament, Top v. Bottom of
the Island, was played during the week
resulting in a win for the former team.

Attention is drawn to the advertisement
of Mr J. E. Coomer which appears in
these columns. Mr Coomer conducts his
agencies under unique circumstances as
indicated at a recent meeting of the Re-
patriation Board. The advertiser is a
discharged soldier who has been in the
for over 40 weeks, and will be unable to
get up for some considerable time. We
understand he has a telephone installed at
his bed-side and through this agency is
working up his business. The Chairman
of the Repatriation Board (Mr W. Thomp-
son) expressed appreciation of Mr Coom-
er's determination to make good. It
would be of valuable assistance to a dis-
serving case if business men who can read
the lines advertised would get into touch
with him.

Attention is directed to the advertise-
ment appearing in these columns of Mr
Fraser who is at present making a specu-
lative of the erection of soldier's memo-
rials. Plans and a variety of designs can
be obtained, and the work already com-
pleted will speak for itself. Mr Fraser
has completed a memorial at Dighton and
has now under construction Mandeville,
Gtataua, Waikaka and Invercargill South.
Suggestions for memorials tablets can also
be obtained. The advertisement appears
on Leader page.

At the termination of what has been a
very successful football season, the old
time players have decided to entertain
players along with the Rugby Union and
Referees' Association at a dinner to be
held on October 11th, at 7.30 p.m. Any
old-time players who are willing to fall
in with the arrangement can obtain tick-
ets at 15s each. Any who are unable to
attend may send a contribution to assist
in defraying expenses. All communi-
cations to be sent to J. A. Doig, Doig
street, Invercargill