

APPENDIX No. 4

support of claims advanced in respect of the administration of the Soldier Settlement Board."

It is not within the jurisdiction of this Committee to conduct an investigation into the administration of the Soldier Settlement Act, but only to consider any questions concerning land settlement as it affects the re-establishment of returned soldiers. A letter was received from the Honourable the Minister in charge of the Soldier Settlement Act administration to the effect that if specific cases of complaints or grievances or charges might be preferred, the Minister and the Board would be pleased if the Committee would hear the evidence brought before it in order that a determination might be reached as to the merit of the complaint as a criticism of the administration of the Act. The Veterans' Associations were also evidently desirous that the Committee should consider the evidence.

The Committee has therefore seen fit to receive the evidence submitted by the Secretary-Treasurer of the G.W.V.A., and has considered the complaints or allegations made.

The cases submitted are for the most part complaints from or on behalf of individuals who did not secure from the Board what they thought they should have secured. The Committee finds that in certain cases applications for benefits were not entertained because they could not be allowed within the scope and spirit of the Act. One complaint had relation to the case of an applicant of mature age and inexperienced in successful farming, who was unable to satisfy the Board as to his qualifications. Another was the case of an applicant to purchase additional land who was already farming his own land, whose case came clearly in conflict with the limitations of the Act and regulations.

Another case claimed compensation for losses incurred for time and money lost in taking possession of certain land before title was complete. In a number of cases where it was alleged settlers had lost stock through neglect or adverse regulation of the Board it was shown by inspection reports that attention which could reasonably be expected in the way of assistance and supervision was rendered by the officers of the Board and that certain cases cited by name in the complaint as having lost from three to ten head of stock actually had not lost the stock; that certain of the persons named were actually not settlers of the Board at all.

In certain cases relief for personal distress on the part of individuals who suffered hardship were matters for the Federal Emergency Relief and in the specific case cited it was evident from the papers on record that the hardship was not due to neglect on the part of officers of the Board.

In another case the complainant forwarded particulars that certain parties had acted improperly in connection with the sale of certain land to the Board. Allegations in this case had previously reached the Board and the Board had at its own instance set machinery in motion for the ascertaining of the facts with a view to appropriate action. It has legal officers for the purpose of investigation and punishment of illegal acts and fraud. It is unavoidable that some persons, vendors of land or others, may seek to make profits wrongfully at the expense of the Board. The Board must take appropriate action against such persons and in this case the Board is shown to have acted with promptness so far as the case has yet advanced, the enquiry being still in progress.

In the matter of relief to settlers who were short of feed for stock owing to the abnormal feed situation in the Western provinces, last winter, the Board submitted its statement of the amounts advanced to its settlers for feed since the 1st of May last year when the shortage commenced. Approximately half a million dollars was advanced by the Board for the item of feed alone since the 1st of April. The evidence brought before the Committee as to the general feed situation showed clearly that not only new settlers but old and experienced farmers throughout certain districts suffered heavily in this regard. The Committee cannot conclude from the evidence submitted