

APPENDIX No. 6

The CHAIRMAN: That is absolutely true, Mr. Black, and moreover, if you would kindly write down your remarks they will be printed in the next issue, and we will be very glad indeed if you will do that. I have just explained the unfortunate circumstances through which a lot of what was said was left out. Now, I suppose we will proceed with the evidence of Major Barnett. Is it the intention of the Committee that Major Barnett should be sworn? I am informed that it is not always done with the officials of the Board. That is a matter for the Committee to decide.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I do not think it is necessary, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: On the other hand, we might make it a rule now, that will apply in the future. If officers are to be sworn we might decide it now; if they are not to be sworn, we will follow that course all through, because we cannot swear one official and then not swear another.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: Yes, that is correct; and if we are going to have a standing rule, there might be times when some members might think it was desirable to have a witness sworn, so perhaps we had better have a standing rule.

The CHAIRMAN: My opinion is that it is preferable; therefore, we will swear this witness.

Major JOHN BARNETT called and sworn.

The CHAIRMAN: According to the decision of the Committee, I ask Major Barnett to be so kind as to give us a general statement of the activities of the Board.

Major BARNETT: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, two years ago the Committee which investigated soldier affairs including soldiers' settlements, was made up of practically the same gentlemen as make up this present Committee. At the previous sessions we went quite elaborately into the method of procedure of granting loans and the scope of the Act, and matters of that sort. These were printed, and I doubt very much if you wish me to go over all that again. I think that the members of the Committee are familiar, Mr. Chairman, with the provisions of the various Soldier Settlement Acts that have been passed. It was also elaborated very fully, the method of granting loans, how loans were granted and how settlers were established on the land. There is another reason, I think, why that evidence would not be so pertinent to-day as perhaps in previous years; soldiers settlement, so far as the establishment of men on the land is concerned, is practically at an end; so very few new men are being established that that end of the work is a very small part of it. After all, as far as the general settlement is concerned, the principal statement would be concerning the number of men who are on the land, the number of abandonments for one reason or another, and the state of repayments. I take it that these three are the principal subjects of soldier settlement. The number of men that we have established altogether is 23,743; that is, returned soldiers. In addition to that there are 1,074 civilians who are receiving a certain amount of supervision, because they are indebted to the Government. They are indebted to the public, having purchased lands that had been abandoned by soldiers. The 23,743 settlers were established in the various years in the following numbers. This is a new statement that has not been given before, I think, in the previous sittings of other committees. 667 men were established in 1918; 10,153 were established in 1919; 7,719 were established in 1920; 2,333 were established in 1921; 1,355 were established in 1922; 1,153 were established in 1923.

[Major John Barnett.]