

were represented by their premiers and the Commonwealth Government by the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth Government having been in England at the time of the first conference. In effect, they practically adopted the resolutions of the first conference with but comparatively slight changes. The House is aware that the Commonwealth Government of Australia does not own the public lands, except some land in the northern country which is unsuitable for agriculture. The land is in the ownership of the various state governments, and while at that conference it was admitted on the part of the representatives of the state governments that there would be a very great advantage in having the whole question of the location of returned soldiers dealt with by one central government, still, so jealous were they of their state jurisdiction that they would not hand over their lands to the Commonwealth Government, even for this laudable purpose. It was recognized, however, that inasmuch as it would take a considerable amount of money to finance this enterprise—and they expected a considerable percentage of their soldiers to locate on the lands—and inasmuch as the Commonwealth Government could go into the money markets of the world and borrow money at a lower rate of interest than could the State Governments, it was decided that the State Governments would supply the land, not as our legislation provides, by way of free land grant, but, under their local state land laws, by lease or by sale, and that the Commonwealth Government would supply the money. The Commonwealth Government lends the money to the State Governments and the State Governments, in turn, lend to the returned soldier to enable him to purchase stock and implements, the amount, as in the New Zealand legislation, not to exceed, in any one case £500. This money is to bear a rate of interest for the first year of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, rising by one-half per cent per annum until the cost price of the money has been reached, plus a reasonable amount for working expenses. The difference in the rate of interest—that is, the difference between the rate paid by the returned soldier and the rate paid by the State Government—is to be borne equally by the Commonwealth and the various State Governments. Agricultural instruction is provided under the policy settled upon by Australia, by two methods. The State Governments are to supply agricultural farms, where agricultural instruction may be received. These farms are to be subsidized,

[Mr. Roche.]

pound for pound, by the Commonwealth and the State Governments, and the soldier can receive, if he so chooses, his agricultural training on these agricultural farms, or he may receive his instruction on private farms approved by the State Governments. The policy decided upon by the Commonwealth Government of Australia provides, also, that similar assistance shall be granted to ex-service men of the British army. That goes a little further than the legislation of New Zealand, but not so far as our legislation, which includes the forces of the whole British Empire. This policy of the Commonwealth Government is to be administered by a Land Board, the personnel of which is to be composed of a representative from each of the State Governments and a representative from the Commonwealth Government. This, in short, is the policy which has been decided upon in Australia.

After the South African war we in Canada adopted the policy of issuing scrip to our returned soldiers to the amount of 320 acres to each soldier. Scrip certificates were issued to 7,340 soldiers, and of this number only 657 personally made entry for the land. It is a well known fact that a considerable percentage of this number did not remain permanently upon the land. The scrip was transferable; it became a matter of speculation; indeed, it largely fell into the hands of speculators. To put it mildly, the policy was not a success in placing the soldiers upon the land and keeping them there.

In the light of that experience I venture to say that there could not be found to-day members of any government who would ask a Canadian Parliament for a repetition of that form of recognition for our returned soldiers. In my opinion we can merely speculate as to the number of soldiers whom we may secure, even with the greatest inducements, to locate upon the land. We are informed, on the one hand, by those whose opinions are entitled to every consideration, that a great many returned soldiers who have followed indoor occupations, such as working in shops and factories and clerking in stores, will since their enlistment have become so enamoured of an outdoor life, and will have derived such physical benefits therefrom, that they will not care to return either to their former indoor or to similar occupations. This looks all right in theory, but how it will work out in practice is another matter. We are not in a position to make even an approximate estimate as to the number of those who will locate upon the land. On the other hand,