

## CASH GRANT TO SOLDIERS WHO SETTLE ON THE LAND.

The Government has taken action already for the procuring of land for soldier settlement. A statement from the Department of the Interior says it is well known that the Minister has had under preparation a Bill for presentation to Parliament at the coming session, enabling the Soldier Settlement Board to acquire farm land within settlement districts, and as well to acquire stock and implements for sale on specially favourable terms to returned soldiers. The granting of the armistice and the consequent demobilization of the C.E.F. is now rapidly adding to the demands made upon the Board, and the very great desirability of placing the Board in a position to provide the soldiers with land sufficiently soon for this season's operations has convinced the Government that no time should be lost and that appropriate legislation should, under the War Measures Act, be put into effect at once to take care of immediate demands. It is understood that very early in the session Parliament will be asked to ratify the action taken by the Government by the passage of a Bill practically along the same lines as the Order in Council just enacted. This course has been urged upon the Minister by the Great War Veterans and the Army and Navy Veterans, who have all along taken a keen interest in the project and are rendering the Board every assistance in their power.

The provisions of the law just put into effect are briefly as follow: The Soldier Settlement Board is invested with authority and provided with funds for the purchase of lands suitable for immediate settlement by soldiers. They are also empowered to purchase stock, equipment, and building material for sale to settlers. Sales are to be at cost price to the Board. It is the intention of the Board that as far as possible the soldier will select his own land, the price, of course, being subject to supervision by the Board. In every case as well, before the assistance of the Board in the purchase can be obtained, the soldier must pass a Qualification Council, at least one of which is established in every province, which Qualification Council determines whether or not the applicant is reasonably certain to succeed as a farmer. If the settler so qualifies and the land selected is deemed such as will enable him, by proper application, to earn, for himself a living thereon and to pay for, the purchase is made through the assistance of the Board, the soldier being asked to pay 10 per cent. of the purchase price in cash. Not more than \$4,500 must be left outstanding and owing the Board at the time of sale. Provision is, however, made to cover cases of men who may not be able to pay the 10 per cent., but who have had already successful farm-

ing experience in Canada and who are otherwise qualified or equipped as to specially fit them as farmers. In these cases the whole or part of the 10 per cent. may be dispensed with, and consequently a balance may be left owing by them up to \$5,000. The interest on the balance owing is to be 5 per cent. and all is to be repayable on the amortization plan by twenty-five annual instalments. The Board is also given authority to provide the soldiers with implements and stock up to a maximum value of \$2,000. It will be seen that this amount is \$500 above the figure that was some time ago estimated as the probable limit of advance for this purpose. Should the soldier have already implements and stock, but no cash, the matter can be adjusted with the Board. The advance for implements and stock is to be repayable in four annual instalments, commencing in the third year, there being no interest charged thereon for the first two years. A further assistance may also be given the settler by way of an advance up to \$1,000 for permanent improvements, including the value of building material supplied. This advance is repayable on the same terms as the balance owing on the land.

While the amounts owing the Settlement Board remain unpaid the land and goods supplied are fully protected from seizure to the prejudice of the Board, nor can sales or charges be made without the Board's consent. The crops grown are protected from seizure to the extent of the obligations due the Board or to fall due within a reasonable time after seizure. Every care is taken that the soldier shall not be made the victim of aggressive or unscrupulous salesmanship and that the assistance intended for the soldier is not by one means or the other diverted to the enrichment of somebody else. It is felt that by making these provisions absolutely clear in advance no injustice will be done.

The terms of the law as now enacted are, as can readily be seen, such as to commit the Dominion to a very substantial outlay with regard to each man who qualifies as a settler under the Act. In the case of men who may become entitled to have the cash payment dispensed with, the commitment may run up to \$8,000; in the case of others, who will, of course, be the vast majority, the outlay may reach \$7,500. To make the scheme a success, it is, therefore, imperatively necessary that the greatest possible care be taken not to encourage the settlement of men who are not likely to succeed. To do so will not only involve the country in loss, but would waste the time and energy of the settler. It is, therefore, hoped that the organization established will take care of this danger and will be such as to sift out the men whose knowledge, experience and determination make them very probable successes as settlers in this country.