

Mr. McKENZIE: Are these men under the department or do they come under a separate organization?

Mr. MEIGHEN: THE Soldier Settlement Board is a separate organization under the Minister of the Interior. It does not report through the Deputy Minister of the Interior, but through the chairman of the board direct to myself. The figures for Winnipeg are respectively, 55, 37, 28, or 76 per cent; Calgary, 41, 34, 30 or 88 per cent. I may say, with Calgary in mind, that among the best class of returned soldier we have been able to get is the private. We find that if we can get the private returned soldier with the necessary ability—and we have certainly succeeded in some cases in getting men with the necessary ability in a conspicuous degree—his influence and his acceptability with the men generally is even greater than that of the returned soldier officer. Such a man we have in Calgary—a Mr. Thomas Smith, a returned soldier with one arm. The figures for Edmonton are: Total, 37, 28 males, 23 of whom are returned soldiers, or 82 per cent. Regina 40, 24, 20 or 83 per cent. Prince Albert 23, 16, 13 or 81 per cent; Saskatoon 19, 13, 11 or 85 per cent; Vancouver 35, 24, 19 or 79 per cent; Victoria 20, 10, 8 or 80 per cent. That is the distribution of the organization throughout the Dominion.

Mr. McKENZIE: Is it the duty of these groups to operate exclusively in a certain province, or are their duties of an inter-provincial character?

Mr. MEIGHEN: There are provincial divisions. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island each organization operates for its own province. The same is true of Ontario, where we have a somewhat different system by reason of the provincial organization fitting in and being used as an auxiliary. In Saskatoon we have three head offices—at Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. In Alberta two—at Calgary and Edmonton. In Manitoba one. In British Columbia two—at Victoria and Vancouver. In Alberta and British Columbia we have also a suboffice in the most active outlying points.

Mr. M. CLARK: Will the Committee be right in assuming that most of these male employees have had previous experience of farming?

Mr. MEIGHEN: I think I am safe in saying they have all had experience of farming without a single exception. In fact, in all positions of any responsibility the man is an expert, in a greater or less de-

gree; he is the best expert we can get. For example, Colonel Innes is the head of the agricultural training work. He has done academic work as well as practical farming all his life, and is a very distinguished graduate of an agricultural college. It is men of that type we have sought and have succeeded, I think, in securing.

I was about to enter upon a discussion of the stock and equipment sphere of our operations. The board lends money at 5 per cent on the land. That, of course, is one-half of one per cent less than the Dominion Government can secure the money for, and taking into account the length of time given for payment the saving to the soldier over what another man starting farming has to surmount is a very substantial sum indeed, to say nothing at all of the total remission of interest on his stock and equipment loan for two years. Not second in any way to that important consideration is the advantage he gets in the purchase of his stock and equipment out of the proceeds of his loan.

Having decided that we ought to address ourselves to the task of getting the soldier a better price in the purchase of all these articles than the ordinary retail price, we entered into arrangements with the manufacturers of every article that the soldier desires—that is, everything he is entitled to buy out of the Government loan. The Government, as is manifestly necessary, supervises every purchase. Not a single dollar of the money we loan to the soldier is spent except under the specific supervision, as to every article, of the board itself, and in the determination of what he is allowed to purchase and the payment, care is exercised and definite and irresistible rules are followed. For example, the board has determined that a man shall not be permitted to purchase a tractor. We did not think he should enter upon that phase of farming, as it is based upon a scale of operations that is beyond the capacity of a man starting out as a pioneer to be made a settler of. That is something which he could reach later on. If we permitted any infraction of that rule we would be engaging upon payment and launching men upon work that perhaps they could not cope with, and so we do not permit it. Limits are also placed upon the price that can be paid for horses, and so on.

We have managed to succeed in effecting arrangements with the producers of all the goods that the soldier will require and pay for, out of his own money which redound to the very great advantage of the soldier settlers. In the first place, we have effected