

PRIVATES GET MOST JOBS IN CIVIL SERVICE

Only 22 Officers Given Positions and Nine of Those Enlisted as Privates.

COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT IS A GREAT SUCCESS

(Special Correspondence.)

VICTORIA, Oct. 23.—Criticism has been leveled at the Provincial Government from time to time by reason of its alleged indifference to the lot of the returned soldier. Lacking either the desire to be accurate or any inclination to discover the facts, an impression has been created that the Civil Service Act has failed utterly to redress the wrongs of an obsolete system, which had scant regard for merit and was equally indifferent to a Government's obligation where the returned man was concerned.

Detecting an attempt on the part of some who still owe their allegiance to a former regime and attracted by the more recent utterances of the Leader of the Opposition himself—who declared from the public platform a few days ago that, as far as he could see, the only soldier who stood a chance with the present government was the officer—the Hon. J. D. MacLean, Minister of Education and Provincial secretary, has just completed a survey of the appointments made since the Civil Service Act went into force on July 1, 1918, up to the present time.

Shows the Facts

The result of that investigation is now authorized for publication. It reveals the fact that during the sixteen months in which the Act has been in operation no less than 220 former members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force have been reinstated in their former or better positions in the public service of the Province. The report also gives the number of the new appointments filled exclusively by returned soldiers during the sixteen months in question as 146.

Out of this number, however, it is pointed out by Dr. MacLean, only twenty-two have been filled by the "officer class," which is alleged by the Opposition Leader to have had all the show. Even with this small number of positions going to those members of the C.E.F. who possessed commissioned rank, the official statistics disclose that no less than nine of that number entered Canada's army through the private's door. That is to say, 124 members of the Civil Service were either privates or non-commissioned officers at the time of donning and at the time of doffing khaki, and that nine out of the twenty-two officer-members of the public service became elevated to commissioned rank during their career in the army abroad.

In the light of this information—which is accessible to any British Columbian who considers the information the subject of sufficient importance to direct his or her inquiry to the Civil Service Commissioner—it will be seen that to all intents and purposes thirteen of the "officer class" only were appointed to positions and that the remaining 133, referred to as having been appointed within the period under review, were privates or non-commissioned officers.

Community Soldier Settlement.

It is interesting to note, moreover, British Columbia's progress in other phases of repatriation: This Province, for instance, has set the pace for the British Empire in its community soldier settlement undertakings. Although dubbed "economically unsound" by the Federal authorities, the original proposal evolved on board the Empress of Asia on her long trip from Liverpool to British Columbia was not allowed to languish in official pigeon holes. The Provincial Land Settlement Board saw its possibilities and purchased large tracts of land at Courtenay and at Creston—other areas will be acquired later—in order that every practical element with definite economical possibilities could be put to test. It is, of course, pioneering work; but popular consent already has been given a unanimously favorable verdict.

Apropos of clearing work in its relation to this class of settlement—in itself a prime economic

factor in the working out of such an ambitious project—it is interesting to observe the official figures just issued for publication by the Hon. E. D. Barrow, Minister of Agriculture, particularly in view of the fact that alarming reports are abroad hinting at abnormal capital charges to be borne without hope of results commensurate. The reverse, in fact, is the case. Director W. S. Latta, of the Provincial Land Settlement Board, is the authority for an official rejoinder to the suggestion referred to. He deals with the following operations at Melville—Courtenay's chosen name for its settlement—and shows that actual clearing has been carried out by the soldiers themselves at a substantially lower figure per acre than estimates given to the Government for similar work by outside contractors.

Colonel Latta states that the actual cost of clearing 147.7 acres—which includes blasting, tonkey work, burning, etc., leaving the land ready for levelling and plowing, has averaged \$210.24 per acre. And it must be remembered that Melville's rainfall is in the neighborhood of sixty inches per annum, that fact alone accounting for heavy timber and rank growth; but also for deep and excellent soil. Rough clearing in respect of 72.8 acres, he pointed out, cost \$91.04 per acre.

Cheap Ready-Made Farms

Each farm—referring in this instance to Farms No. 32 to 40—has ten to twenty acres cleared. (Continued on Page 5.)

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