

MEMORANDUM ON THE QUESTION OF INCREASED PAY FOR SOLDIERS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS.

THE HOME FRONT LEAGUE has for some time concerned itself with the question of soldiers' and their dependants' pay. It is felt that the chief reason for the poor recruiting in the Union is due to the fact that a man is not prepared to enlist without the assurance that his wife and children will be satisfactorily provided for. It is odious and degrading for a family which has never accepted charity to apply for assistance to the Governor-General's National War Fund, an institution which perpetuates the gross inequalities in our society. It is chiefly concerned with raising the incomes of people who now find it impossible to come out on their military allowances.

We maintain that such a state of affairs ought not to exist. Every soldier's family should be able to manage on the military pay. This will no doubt mean a certain amount of hardship for the upper middle-class families, but it will mean improved rates of pay for those thousands of families drawn from the lower middle-class and the working class. The public detests the Fund. There is not the slightest doubt of this; wherever we have held meetings we find that there is general agreement and applause when that institution is attacked. The public sees for itself that the Fund is a charitable institution however much the authorities attempt to deny this fact. The money is raised in a completely inequitable and farcical manner, many wealthy people escaping their liabilities to the soldier and his family.

The common people can see no reason why the Fund should exist at all. They ask for taxation measures to be introduced and for loans to be raised to increase the pay of soldiers and their dependants, so that they will not have to beg for subsidies in order to maintain a decent standard of living. It is not something revolutionary that we ask for. The very principles outlined in this memorandum were put into practice at the outbreak of war in England. If budgets don't balance we don't care. They don't have to. But if soldiers' families are deprived of the necessities of life, we not only care, but we are deeply concerned because it hinders the war effort and breaks the spirit of the people.

Here then, are our suggestions:-

- 1. The pay of soldiers should be increased and they should not be obliged to make allotments from their pay to their dependants.

	<u>P.D.</u>	<u>Proposed Rate.</u>
Privates	3/6 - £5.5.0 per month	£10. 0. 0 per month
Lance Corporals	5/- - 7.10.0 "	11. 0. 0 "
Corporals	6/- - 9. 0.0 "	12. 0. 0 "
Sergeants	9/6 - 14. 5.0 "	15. 0. 0 "
Staff Sergeants	10/6 - 15.15. 0 "	16. 0. 0 "
Warrant Officers(2)	13/- - 19.10.0 "	20. 0. 0 "
Warrant Officers(1)	15/- - 22.10.0 "	23. 0. 0 "

- 2. The wives of all soldiers, irrespective of rank should receive the same allowances. It costs the same for a private's wife to live as it does for a major's wife. If this is not the case at present, the new system of allowances will level out inequalities in our system.

At present wives are paid as follows:

<u>Wives of:-</u>	<u>P.D.</u>	<u>P.Month.</u>
Privates	4/6	£6.15. 0
Lance Corporals	4/6	6.15. 0

- Corporals

<u>Wives Of:</u>	<u>P.D.</u>	<u>P. Month</u>
Corporals	4/9	£7. 2. 6
Sergeants	5/3	7.17. 6
Staff Sergeants	5/6	8. 5. 0
Warrant Officers (2)	5/9	8.12. 6
Warrant Officers (1)	7/6	11. 5. 0.

It is now proposed that wives, irrespective of the rank of the volunteer should received £15. 0. 0 per month. The first child shall receive £5. 0. 0 per month and each subsequent child £2. 0. 0 per month. Thus a soldier's wife and 2 children should receive £22. 0. 0 per month without including any allotment which her husband might care to make. This should be sufficient to enable her to buy the necessities of life, which include clothing, entertainments, etc.

It will be noticed that the rates of pay suggested by us do not differ from the European Trade Union rates. We submit that a soldier is, or should be, a skilled man in the same way as a member of a Union is a skilled worker. Furthermore a soldier faces a danger which a civilian, in South Africa at any rate, is not subjected to.

3. The rates suggested above for soldiers are basic rates, and shall not detrimentally affect any additional allowances received by all ranks at present.

Extra allowances received in the field shall not be withdrawn when the soldier returns to the Union after being in the field.

4. Up till now the dependants, other than wives and children, have been most shabbily treated in matters of pay. A mother has to apply to the Governor-General's National War Fund for an allowance from the Department of Defence. Her case is investigated, a means test is applied and if there is a shortfall between what she receives from her son prior to his enlistment and what she receives now from his allotment, she is entitled to a grant, which cannot exceed £5. 2. 6 per month.

We suggest that a mother should receive £12.10. 0 per month in respect of one son only, provided she has no husband in the army and provided she has no other income other than what she receives from Old Age Pensions, Invalidity Grants, Phthisis Pensions and other such benefits; and we should like to stress that any income which she derives from her own employment should not be taken into consideration. The earnings of other children in the household or contributions of other children, who are not in the army, should not be taken into consideration.

5. If the son supported other minor children, then the mother must be treated by the Department of Defence in exactly the same way as a wife i.e. she should receive £15. 0. 0 per month plus £5. 0. 0 for the first child and £2. 0. 0 for each subsequent child. The one proviso we make here is that the son prior to his enlistment must have contributed at least two-thirds of the total household income.
6. A mother and father living together should receive £15. 0. 0 per month from the son, provided that the father is not working, and provided that they have no other income other than what they receive from Old Age Pensions, Invalidity Grants and other such benefits.
7. There are other dependants for whom provision will have to be made provided the soldier supported them before, e.g. aunts, uncles, guardians, siblings. On enlistment the soldier will have to make an affidavit to the effect that he supported those dependants and the case will be investigated by the Department of Defence, not by a charitable organisation.

AFRICAN & COLOURED SOLDIERS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS.

The question of payments to African and Coloured soldiers and their dependants is under discussion at the moment. This question will be covered in a separate memorandum.

THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS SHOULD BE APPLICABLE TO ALL SOLDIERS.

1. All incomes be liable for taxation.
2. That the poll tax be abolished for all soldiers.
3. That ration and lodging allowances received in kind shall not be taxable.
4. Artisans and engineers in the army must be made to fall within the scheme of pay outlined above. We do not want to reduce the pay of any soldier. If an engineer has been receiving 6/- per day, i. e. £9. 0. 0 per month, he shall not receive £10. 0. 0 per month and his wife £15. 0. 0 per month. If he has been earning 10/- per day, he shall receive the same pay as a sergeant.
5. Cost of Living Allowances should be made to all dependants and must be the same for all dependants irrespective of the rank of the soldier.

There is one further suggestion that we should like to make. There might be special cases where emergency assistance is necessary. We suggest that the money collected by the Governor-General's National War Fund be taken over for this purpose. The soldier should make application to the Department of Defence and if his case is considered to be genuine, then an allowance should be made to him from this Fund. On enlisting a soldier should fill in a special form specifying his commitments which he has to meet and which are not covered by the Moratorium Act. If it is felt that he needs an additional amount of money to cover these commitments, then a grant should be made to him when he enlists. Furthermore, we suggest that when a child is born a soldier's wife be granted the sum of £15. 0. 0 to cover expenses for clothing, etc.

It is recognised by us that with the circulation of so much additional money there is a danger of inflation. We suggest, therefore, that this scheme can only be put into practice if there is a proper system of price control for all the essentials of life and that rationing be introduced.

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