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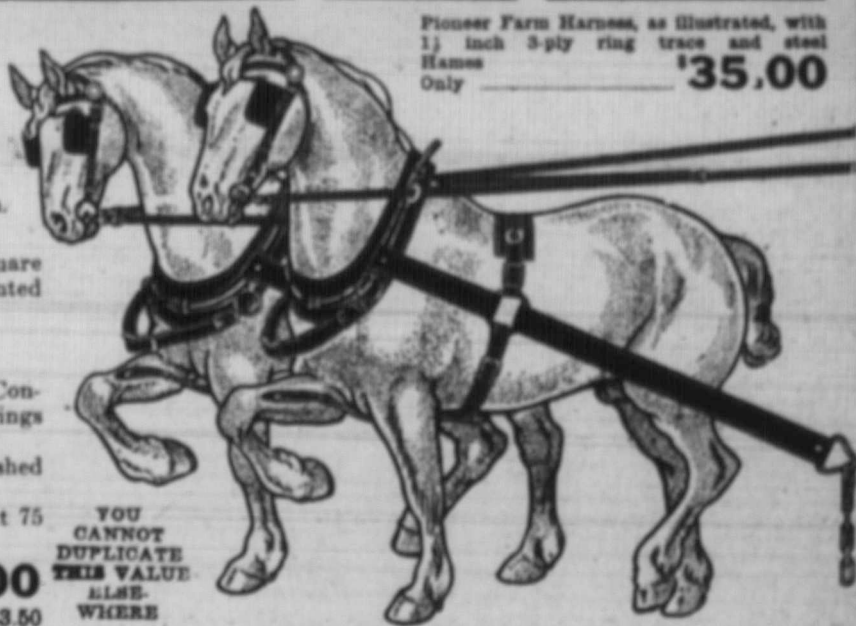
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Soldiers Civil Re-establishment

The Work of Re-establishing Our Returning Army in Civil Occupations

(By Hespericus)

The Dominion government, after prolonged pressure on the part of the Great War Veterans' Association, have announced the institution of a new department of government to be called the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment. It will be in charge of Senator Sir James Loughheed, with F. B. McCurdy as departmental under-secretary. The duties of the department will be to make plans for and supervise the process of re-establishing our returning army in civilian occupations. S. A. Armstrong, who has done excellent work on the staff of the Military Hospitals Commission, has been selected as Deputy Minister. The new department, which will control all re-educational work, will assume charge of all soldiers as soon as they are discharged from the army, but up to the time of discharge, invalided soldiers will remain under the charge of the Canadian Army Medical Corps. The Military Hospitals Commission is abolished, 50 institutions now supervised by it coming under the Medical Corps and the 27 others under the new department. The institutions controlled by the latter will be hospitals and homes where permanently crippled, blind and tubercular soldiers are concentrated. Many people hold that the new department's scope is not wide enough, that it should have taken charge of all returning soldiers from the day that they landed in Canada and that the retention of control by the military authorities over the wounded who are in progress of recovery is due to a desire of militarist bureaucrats to fasten their tentacles more firmly upon our Canadian social organization.

Recovering the Civilian Attitude

There is no doubt that it is advisable that returned soldiers should be got out of uniform as soon as possible even at a sacrifice of the justifiable pride in wearing the khaki that they fought in. The military attitude is utterly different from the civilian. The soldier particularly, when not in actual fighting, expects to be given orders and told what to do by some superior authority. As long as he is in uniform he will never display much initiative towards securing employment for himself. The successful civilian attitude depends upon readiness to fend for one-

self, and as long as the men are kept in uniform, under military discipline they will never recover the civilian attitude which is necessary for their successful return to industrial and agricultural vocations. On the other hand a man must either be soldier or a civilian, he cannot be half and half. As long as wounded soldiers have to be together in hospitals and homes in large numbers, it is necessary to have some discipline, and the military authorities maintain, probably quite properly, that this could only be enforced by a military organization such as the Canadian Army Medical Corps. Hence its retention of control over a large number of hospitals.

However, the proper policy should be to transfer at the earliest possible moment every man that is cured of his wounds or disease to the new department. Much of its success will depend upon the quality of its personnel, and it is to be hoped that the political favoritism which has marked many of the appointments in connection with the Military Hospitals Commission will now disappear. There are well founded complaints that the courses of re-education hitherto provided have been very ineffective and futile. A certain proportion of men have been trained to be chauffeurs and clerks, but a great deal of money and time has been wasted with scanty results, and we have an enormous lot to learn from both England and France in the matter of re-education.

Duties of the New Department

The new department will also exercise a general supervision over the policy of the pensions board but the pension commissioners are to be allowed complete independence in its management. On the whole the pensions board is one of the most efficient of the government departments, and Major Todd, its medical member, has done magnificent work in investigating and reporting upon the French system of handling the wounded and discharged soldiers.

The new land settlement board also comes under Senator Loughheed's department and is now, after long delays, beginning active operations. On its success more than anything else depends the solution of the gigantic

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