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A Real Welcome

In the City of Vancouver there is an arch of welcome bearing the legend "Your Old Jobs are Waiting for You, Boys," which is probably the most practical expression of gratitude to returning soldiers one could conceive. From protests that we have received and from what have appeared in the daily press, Canada's national and municipal welcomes to her returning soldiers have not been, nor are, as genuine as they might be. Too many of the signs of welcome mean nothing more than sentiment, and sentiment, while an excellent thing, has its limitations. It does not for instance ensure the means for providing a living for our returned men. This lack of practical sympathy on the part of Canada's civil population towards them, the returning soldiers soon learn of, on their landing in Canada, from their comrades who, having come home earlier, had been able to test the value of the many welcomes. Now, to the Vancouver man, after passing such a gauntlet of pessimism on their long railway journey, such a sign of welcome would indeed brighten up their spirits. It is to be hoped that Vancouver will live right up to its promise, and thus set an example to other cities in the East as well as in the West. And this brings us to the circular letter that Mr. Harry Bragg, the Municipal Representative on the Repatriation Committee, sent out to the municipal councils asking for their co-operation in welcoming returned soldiers, along sane and practical lines. We understand that from 3,690 requests sent out, each one to either an urban or rural council, Mr. Bragg had received about 600 replies. This is not as it should be. Instead of only receiving 20 per cent., he should have received 100 per cent. of replies. We for a long time have been urging co-operation between the Federal and Municipal authorities in the matter of repatriation

and reconstruction, and now that the Government does realize the value of such co-operation, not only in the interest of the soldiers and their families, but in helping to solve the fast growing problem of unemployment, it is up to the local authorities to do their share. Unemployment is as much a curse on the community as the nation. It affects the local social life more adversely than it does the economic side of the nation, so that everything possible should be done to mitigate the evil.

By the time this will appear in print the Municipal Representative will have sent out to every municipal council a Questionnaire for the purpose of ascertaining what each municipality is doing, or is going to do, in the way of public works. For questionnaires as a rule we have little use, but the one sent out by Mr. Bragg should, if properly answered, have a beneficial effect. We know that many councils are in a dilemma regarding new public works, on account of the difficulty in raising money on the present tight markets. We know too, that many municipalities have already borrowed to the limit of their borrowing powers, and consequently cannot go in for public works at all, at least on their own responsibility. It is quite possible that in such cases the Federal authorities may help, but the first thing to do is for the local authorities to answer the questionnaire. It is during this transition period that is now taking place in Canada that the only means of finding employment for the army of out-of-works are in public works, and a "get together" between the three governing bodies is the only way to provide the means to carry out such public works. Such an opportunity is presented in the Questionnaire sent out by the Repatriation Committee.