

# MINISTER OUTLINES TASK OF REPATRIATION

## WORK OF CO-ORDINATING FABRIC OF REHABILITATION DESCRIBED BY CHAIRMAN

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involves an enormous amount of money. You must remember there are varying conditions; there are all sorts of land difficulties, all sorts of land, and all sorts of prices, there are various kinds of agriculture carried on in these provinces. In some cases the federal government owns the land and in others the provinces. Some provinces will agree to one thing and other provinces will not, and so on. Some two years ago the then government decided on a policy so far as land settlement is concerned of giving to the soldiers federal crown lands. These lands, of course, only existed in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. You might say two provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta, because there are practically none left in Manitoba available for settlement. That was decided on as the policy so far as soldiers' settlement was concerned, to give to the soldiers the right to settle on Federal Crown land with a promise of assistance to the extent of some \$2,500. In addition to that it was laid down as a matter of policy that if a soldier wanted to go ahead by himself, to go on previously owned land or on his own farm or on Crown land in the provinces, the Federal Government would advance a loan up to \$2,500. That policy was laid down over a year and a half or two years ago. It is there to-day. We have no further statutory provision. But then we began to look into that question, to get down to rock bottom, and we found that there was not in this Canada of ours available for settlement, sufficient suitable land to meet the situation, and I am speaking now of land classed as suitable and available, that is within proper distance from railway and other facilities and as a consequence the Government has had to consider the whole question anew and we recently came to the conclusion after discussing the matter with the premiers of all the provinces that the door would be opened and opened wide and that opportunity would be accorded whereby our soldiers could be placed upon purchased land. I say on purchased land. We have got millions of acres of land in this country of ours that has passed away from the crown. This land is now in the hands of private owners, is not being used, but is being held for speculation and I say a decision was reached that that land should be made available in order that our soldiers might get the benefit of it. Instead of forcing them to go away out on the fringes of our settlements in Canada, away from our railway and other settlement facilities, we intend to give them the opportunity of settling down right among our people in this country. It is only right and proper that they should have that chance. They will succeed there where they would never succeed in the world in my judgment if they were put out on the other. Well, let me tell you it took some little time, and thought. I took part in it and I know what it meant. By and by we reached a settlement and now the ground work has all been covered. When the necessary legislation is put through as it will be put through shortly by both federal and provincial houses, I am sure we will have placed on the statute books of this country a policy that will meet the situation so far as settlement of the soldiers is concerned. I am convinced of this as well. If we had attempted to follow along the other lines that had been mapped out failure was written all over. We now have a chance to succeed and more than that the soldier will go out on that land and there will be some thousands and thousands of them who will do it, and they will also have a chance to succeed, which is the most important thing.

Well then, Mr. President, the people overlook the work that has been planned

for and done so well by our different Soldiers Civil Re-establishment departments, under Sir James Lougheed, work previously carried on by the Military Hospitals Commission. The Government take this position that in so far as the disabled soldier is concerned the man who comes back unwell, unfitted, disabled, not prepared to take his place again in our civil life, that the state owes a duty to that man, that the state must take hold of that man and refit him for his place in the community. We have been doing that work for two years. We have something like 150 institutions scattered throughout the country and of various kinds for the purpose of giving medical treatment to men of that class and many of these institutions, most of these institutions, have done splendid work. We have already taken and treated and fitted as well as we can something like 3,000 men and have placed them, that is after treating them, bringing them back as far as we can to a normal condition, training them for special work, we have placed something like 3,000 of these men, soldiers broken in the war, back in the civil life of Canada. Our people do not get that. As a matter of fact the department over which Sir James Lougheed presides has been doing splendid work. Just let me say this again and I say it in all seriousness, that it is only natural and human that people should kick and complain about the mistakes that occur. None of this work that we are carrying on is perfect. It cannot be. We have had the greatest difficulty in this country to provide facilities with which to do this work. Look at the situation in Canada in so far as vocational training is concerned. Our nation is miles behind so far as that work of technical education is concerned. We have not the institutions in the country. We have not the trained men who can do that work and we created that department for the purpose of helping these men who had been broken in the war with the intention of assisting them to the fullest extent in our power so far as technical education, vocational training is concerned. I want to say it was no easy job. We had to create an entirely new organization, erect buildings in places, equip these buildings, get the staff which after all is most important and the hardest thing to do, to get the men to undertake that work. I simply wish to say that while there may be a great many not completely satisfied with the work carried on, in my judgment after having gone into the work of that department as carefully as I have and knowing the difficulties that have been met, and the work that has been done, that the accomplishment has been great. And we trust as our men continue to come back that we will be better able to give those of that class the training they require to put them back in civil life.

### UNITES SIX DEPARTMENTS.

Well, then, we anticipated this employment problem that we have on our hands at our last session by providing for an arrangement whereby both Federal and Provincial Governments could co-operate by the establishment of labour bureaus throughout Canada on the basis that each would contribute one half. That was done after consultation with the provinces. They agreed bureaus of this kind should be established. Already some thirty of these have been set up and are in operation. It is expected that some thirty-four more will be in operation very shortly and we will have from ocean to ocean sixty-four employment agencies set up for the purpose of dealing with the problem of finding employment in the first place for the soldier but also for our civilian population as well.

You ask when this committee was set up. I will tell you very briefly. We found that in so far as the general problem of repatriation was concerned that no less than, I think, six departments of

the government were dealing with some phases of its different aspects. There was the Militia Department, Interior, under which the Soldiers' Settlement Board acts, Labour Department, looking after industrial conditions. We had Sir James Lougheed's department, the Immigration Department was dragged into it, so that all told we had, I think, six departments all having some phases of the work to attend to. In addition to that there were various organizations throughout the country also interested and taking part in this work. For example the Soldier's Aid Commission, established through the whole country under provincial law, assigned definite duties, with thousands of branches everywhere, doing splendid work, but working in the same field. And then the Patriotic Fund, Women's Organizations, Great War Veterans, all doing splendid work in Canada. In other words, when the armistice came and we had this new problem in a larger way on our hands and we began to look into it and saw all the forces that were in operation, we found all sorts of overlapping, overlapping in work, in expenditure, and in effort, and we simply made up our minds that some central body should be created in Ottawa whose business it would be to overlook this whole thing, get the people into consultation, define their work fairly and definitely, in order that everybody would not be trampling on everybody else's toe. Well there was a good deal of annoyance about it. This committee was created for that purpose. It has been in operation now for five or six weeks. It consists of five or six members of the Government whose departments are concerned. We have met every day for an hour during the last five or six weeks. We have just kept our minds on this problem all the time. In addition to that we created what is classed as an interdepartmental committee, that is a committee below our own consisting of all the chief officials of the departments. That committee has been at work for some weeks as well, and as a consequence the work that has been done in that direction in so far as organization is concerned we have had pretty well secured. We have kept in close consultation with them and they are right there. The Great War Veterans have a committee of three sitting there constantly. We expect they will have some five or six men whose business it will be to travel throughout the whole country getting in touch with the various organizations in order to make their men thoroughly acquainted with the plans and organization of the government. When you have a problem like this on hand the best way to do is to get out and get at it by personal touch, not by pamphlets and literature, but by men actually on the job, and I consider one of the best agencies we will have in so far as this work is concerned are the different field secretaries that we have, who will bring the message actually home in person to the various organizations throughout Canada that will be interested in this work. We also have all the women's organizations of the country represented on our committee. Three ladies represent these various organizations and one of them is there all the time. Of course we want our women's organizations to play their part. We have swept in all the municipalities through the officers of the Municipal Union and the secretary of the union is there. I might indicate what we asked them to do. One of the questions that naturally comes up is as to how our municipalities are to assist in this question of employment. We have asked the Municipal Unions to ascertain throughout the whole of Canada what the programme of all our municipalities is, as rapidly as possible, next year in so far as public works are concerned. That touches on the question of employment, and we have been holding up our public works for the past four years. But that doesn't get at the problem. It doesn't get at the problem of organization. So far as this problem is concerned it can accomplish but very little after all. That is, by creating an organization to do this

work you do not provide jobs. That can only come through some source which if I have time I will touch on a little later. I have merely touched in a very general way on what the work we have on our hands means. We have endeavoured to get in touch with all the various organizations in Canada that are playing any part in this problem. Our churches are of assistance and our women's organizations and various other organizations will help. We have been bringing in their chief officials and have sat down and discussed the problem with them and as a result we have a very complete organization in sight. In so far as the whole country is concerned, and I have every confidence if something else will only take place that in so far as this problem is concerned in Canada there is no danger because we will have in being very shortly, it is practically completed, we will have in being an organization that should be complete to handle this problem without any question.

### EVERY ONE MUST HELP.

Well, what is the crux of the whole situation. It is this, that there are too many people in Canada who are prone to put this job entirely upon the back of the government. That is not the place for it. I say again that that is not the place for it. This problem of repatriation of the soldiers and the caring for those thousands of dependents who are to come home will never in the world be solved by any government. There is only one way in which it can be solved and that is by the people of this country. Unless our people, unless our country rallies to help in the solution of this problem, well, I am afraid we are steering straight for serious trouble. This job is a national one, it is a personal one. The question in my mind which every one should ask himself now is not what is the government doing, but what am I prepared to do? You know it is better to be penny wise now than pound foolish a little later on. As I intimated in the first part of my remarks I do not anticipate trouble in this country. I do not look for it because our people during all these trying times have shown themselves to be splendid to the last degree. Our people have not shirked their responsibility in war time and I believe that they will not shirk them in peace time. I believe that our people, who did what they did in the way of raising men, sending them across, supporting them while there, raising the necessary funds in this country to carry on the work, doing what we did in the way of production and in a hundred other ways, I say people who did that in war time are not going to fall down in peace time. A nation that produced the army that smashed its way through after four years of war all the way from Amiens to Mons, after having lost in casualties something like 200,000 men during the war, I say a nation that will produce such an army as that army was, resting in honour at historic Mons when the armistice came, the people who will produce an army like that is not going to fall down on this peace task that we have now taken hold of. But again I say the problem is yours and it is the problem of all the people of Canada, and if there is one idea more than any other I would like to bring home, not only to those in this room, but every man and woman in Canada, it is this: The time has come when they, when you, must take up your share of this work because after all the greatest thing we can do is to see that when these men come back to this Canada of ours, these men who have done so nobly, these men who have fought your battle and my battle, protected your home and my home and your property and my property, I say the one thing they have a right to demand from us as citizens and the one thing I am sure we as citizens will do is to see that every last man of them has an opportunity to get back into our civil life at the very earliest opportunity and into conditions which we as a people and as a nation will not be ashamed of.

Save by the W.S.S. method.