

an asylum. Have you seen our billiard room?" And he showed me with pride the cheery writing and reading-room, the sunny reception-room and the large billiard-room, where the men were smoking and apparently enjoying themselves immensely. It is as easy thing to criticize, but praise from the normal intelligent soldiers is the final test. Since the Provincial Military Hospitals and Soldiers' Aid Commissions have got into running order, I think we may say, without boasting, that Canada has one of the best systems of dealing with her wounded soldiers in the world.

Pensions

PENSIONS paid in 1915 were most inadequate, but they have since been nearly doubled, and through both government and private organizations the provision for the welfare and amusement of the returned soldiers has increased to an extraordinary extent during the past year. Pensions are graded according to the disablement and vary with the rank held at the time of injury. A soldier of the rank and file receives \$480 a year, a sergeant \$510, lieutenant \$720, captain \$1,000, lieutenant-colonel \$1,260, colonel \$1,560, brigadier-general \$2,700. Besides his regular pension, the private soldier gets \$6 a month for each son under 16 and \$6 a month for each daughter under 17. If he is killed his widow gets \$32 a month, with an allowance for each child.

France pays very small cash pensions—\$115 to \$178 a year—but the system is the same as ours, varying according to disability and maintaining the same pension to the injured, no matter what they may earn.

In England the pensions are practically double those of France, but the system is different, for they vary, not only according to the disablement, but are graded according to the pre-war earnings as well. Thus a man earning a large income before the war is recompensed at a higher rate than the former day-labourer. In Canada, as in France, we maintain the pensions of disabled men, no matter what they earn.

The Soldiers' Aid Commission

WHEN a soldier is discharged from the army or killed, there is often a lapse of four or five weeks between the cessation of his pay, the stoppage of his separation allowance from the patriotic fund, and the first payment of his pension from Ottawa, but when one considers the tremendous amount of business involved, the delay seems pardonable—unless you or your family happen to be in need, in that case it is inexcusable! But your Provincial Soldiers' Aid Commission will try to help you. This organization varies somewhat in each province. There are 123 branches in Ontario, with headquarters in Toronto, and they make it a practice to clip from the casualty lists in the papers each morning and send offers of assistance to bereaved relatives.

It is also the duty of each of these branches to see that the returned soldiers of their district are suitably welcomed home and that the relatives of the men are notified of their arrival. In Toronto a fleet of automobiles is provided for the men and decorated street cars are on hand to take the relatives from the depot to the Convalescent Home, while at the same time a military band and guard of honour is provided by Military District No. 2. They are usually taken to the Clearing Hospital in old Knox College, on Spadina Avenue, and from there sent to various convalescent homes, according to the treatment they need, for tuberculosis, insanity, gas, shell-shock or wounds. After they have received the required treatment, they are discharged and pensioned according to their disability.

Vocational Training

A PENSION, however, is not everything. In many cases it is not even the main thing. It is like giving an old friend a dollar to get rid of him instead of putting him in a position to earn two dollars, which is what he wants. And so every effort is being put forth to fit the injured men to fill useful positions. Vocational Training is under the supervision of the Soldiers' Aid Commission, and is carried on in technical schools, the Y. M. C. A., and in the convalescent homes, where it has been found to be of such curative values that it is made practically compulsory. Frequently the men are able to resume their former

callings, but if not, tuition is given in whatever subject is thought to be of the greatest value to them in view of their physical ability and former training. Even when undertaken unwillingly, this work gives the soldier an interest which makes his carriage more erect, his step lighter, and improves his whole outlook on life.

In the offices of the Bell Telephone Company in Montreal there is a draughtsman, a former day-labourer, who, thanks to vocational training, is now earning double his former income. A collier rendered unfit to resume his former occupation has been re-educated and is now getting \$40 a month with board as a janitor, in addition to his pension. Even a man who, through the loss of both arms or both legs, has been regarded as totally disabled, can often be fitted to fill a position.

Take the case of a man with three children, who has lost both arms, but by the use of artificial limbs is able to turn a switch at a railway crossing. He has been regarded as totally disabled and allotted full pension, which, with the allowance for the two children, amounts to \$58 per month, and this added to his own earnings enables him to live very comfortably indeed.

There seems to be no limit to the things disabled men can do, and some are very ingenious in devising substitutes for hands, discarding the instrument maker's perfectly shaped contrivance as useless. A farmer has shaped a tool to replace his left hand so that he can dig, plough or shear sheep as well as any man. It is in the shape of a hook, but in order that a strong pull on his arm should be borne by the shoulder, he affixed a strong leather strap over his left shoulder which is attached to another strap around his chest and back, and these two are joined by a strap fixed to his artificial wrist. For ploughing, the hook is replaced by a U-shaped instrument.

Employment

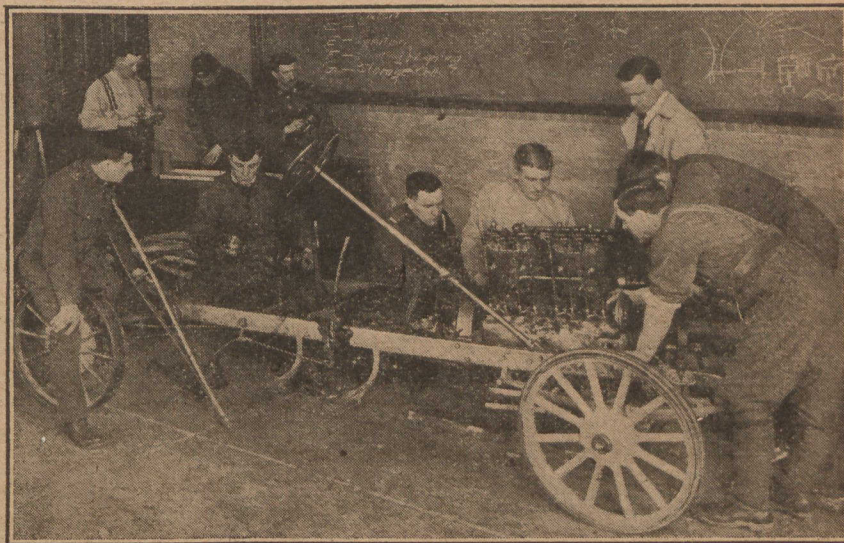
SO far there has been no difficulty in finding employment for returned men in Ontario, and the average wage paid to men placed in positions by the Soldiers' Aid Commission is \$16.02 per week. Daily advertisements appear in 47 different papers, asking people to employ returned soldiers, and applications pour into the office faster than they can be filled. There are over 300 positions waiting for these men in Toronto and 1,000 in Ontario. They can easily place 25 gardeners in various places, while one large landscape gardening concern will take all the men they can supply at \$15 a week. There is a large demand for porters, watchmen, chauffeurs and janitors at the usual wages; lathe hands at 30 cents an hour, orderlies for hospitals \$45 a month and board. A practical engineer is wanted for a concrete inspector, a man who understands thoroughbred stock is needed by a cattle-breeder, book-keepers, electricians and munition inspectors are demanded, and whenever experts are asked for, training is given to fit men to supply this demand. Work is very plentiful just now and supervision is necessary to induce men to choose permanent vocations and avoid "blind alley" jobs. Men are asked to report at the office of the Commission every three months after they have been placed in positions. Frequently a man who has suffered from shell-shock finds that his work involves too much nervous strain, and to him light work must be given for a few months until his nerves have fully recovered. Thus the Commission endeavours to keep track of the men, and the sob-stories one hears of needy veterans arise largely from misunderstanding, false pride or laziness on the part of the men. The employment department, large as it is, represents only about one-tenth of the work carried on by the members of the Commission. The greater part of their time is taken up in explaining misunderstandings and adjusting complaints.

The Provincial Commission of British Columbia

and New Brunswick have worked out most excellent systems of establishing returned soldiers in community farms, similar to the plan adopted by Napoleon, which is now being followed largely in Germany.

In France and England

WHILE congratulating the Canadian Government on the efficient way in which it is now dealing with the returned soldier, we must remember that our wounded have come to us gradually and that we have had due time for preparation. They have not come pouring in by hundreds and thousands from the very outbreak of the war and found us unprepared as in France. There, in spite of the excellent arrangements for vocational training, it is difficult to find work for the men, and the pensions hardly constitute a living wage, but a most excellent system of re-education has been evolved with a model training establishment in each district. The schools for men found suited to business life are conducted under the Ministry of Commerce, bee-keeping, dairying, sheep-tending, etc., are under



Motor Engine Work Class, Technical School, Toronto.

the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, and no State or other public funds are granted to any enterprise that does not employ a fixed proportion of partially disabled soldiers.

In England the Lord Roberts Memorial Workshops are being established in all the principal towns, where men will be given such useful work as they can do and are paid £1 a week, exclusive of pensions. At the same time, any medical or surgical treatment necessary may be continued. Toy-making is the staple industry of these workshops, as it is remunerative and not too arduous. The import of toys into England has been prohibited and now the returned soldiers are replacing German manufacturers not by imitation, but by originality and humour, and are building up a new and remunerative profitable industry for Britain.

We've All Got Poetry

WE have all got music in us, and there comes a time in almost every person's life when it stirs and wants to come out. Women often take it out in singing to their children, or if they haven't children, to the iron-board as they iron. Men, not understanding their feelings, having no proper outlet, used to finding relief in drinking too much. Many vent their poetry in whistling—and countless numbers—in writing atrocious balderdash in rhyme. Part of this comes to this office and is in due course returned to the senders. Sometimes, even though the form is imperfect, the poem is accepted and published—not because the thought therein rivals any of the great poets, nor because the music is good, but because some of these poems represent something true and something good in the country. It is a thousand times better to publish—and to read—a poem that expresses half decently somebody's love for his part of Canada, than to print, or read, some piece of quite perfect verse-making—about nothing.

Beauty of form isn't to be neglected, of course. It would be rubbish to suppose so. But so very often some empty-headed school girl masters the (not very difficult) trick of marching rhythms and rhymes, and simply fills in the form with sentimental banalities.