

In view of the rapidly increasing importance of the returned invalided soldier problem, the Military authorities are of opinion that the recent creation in the Department of Militia and Defence of a "Directorate of Medical Services-Invalids," and the appointment thereto of an officer of high standing in the medical profession, who has seen long service at the front and who will have special supervision over this branch of the Army Medical Service, will result most beneficially in ensuring thorough and sympathetic care and adequate medical treatment of the returned invalided soldier. The "Director of Medical Services-Invalids" would assume full responsibility in connection with the administration of the medical service in the Units of the Military Hospitals Commission Command and by close co-ordination of effort as between the medical services overseas and in Canada a progressive continuity of treatment will be maintained.

A considerable proportion of men returned to Canada for convalescence, or further medical treatment, will eventually become fit for some form of military service, and it is the intention of the military authorities to use these men in instructional and other capacities in Canada.

With regard to those who will be discharged at the completion of their period of treatment as permanently unfit for further military service, every effort would be made to assist them to return to civil life, and to this end the fullest co-operation by all civilian organizations designed for this purpose would be invited and welcomed, as would any assistance that might be rendered by any information or complaint bureaux established to look after the interests of returned soldiers or their dependents.

THE ALTERNATIVE OR CIVILIAN PROPOSITION.

This may be stated as follows:—

In dealing with the question of the enlisted soldier the end immediately in view must be borne in mind. All agencies brought to bear upon the citizen-recruit have but one object, namely, to ultimately place a trained, disciplined fighting man on the firing line. It is therefore unquestionably admitted that the preparation of the soldier for active service should be in the hands of experienced military men.

When, however, the citizen-soldier has become unfitted for further military service, or when the need no longer exists, it is desirable that he be returned to civil life with the least possible friction or delay. His goal now is a normal civil life, and all measures taken on his behalf should be with the purpose of making him once again a producer and a self-supporting citizen. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that his restoration to civilian status is an undertaking likely to be best accomplished under civilian guidance. That is to say, as men of military experience are judged most capable of making soldiers out of civilians, so men of civil experience may rightly be regarded as best adapted for remaking civilians out of returned soldiers.

Since the stream of men has commenced to return and the problem of the disabled soldier has become urgent, a number of bodies, governmental and voluntary, have been created to deal with the different phases of this problem. To a considerable degree these agencies overlap, are loosely related to each other, are responsible to different departments, or are a law unto themselves. The consequence is more or less confusion, with attendant lack of success, in so far as the returned soldier is concerned, in securing the best results.

It is therefore maintained by those who do not hold what may be called the military view of the situation, that greater centralization of control might be secured by the creation of a new governmental department, or sub-department, under a civilian Minister of the Crown, directly charged with responsibility for all measures dealing with the returned soldier, such as: