

## Disabled Men

The most critical moment arrives when the man in the base hospital begins to suspect that he will never again "carry on" as a whole human being

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

A number of matters of general interest were discussed at the second annual Inter-Allied Conference on the After-care of Disabled Men held recently in England. Fourteen countries were represented, and, while no unity of practice could have been expected among countries, differing as widely as Siam and Belgium, or Italy and Newfoundland, there were still many points in which the agreement was close. Leaving to one side technical matters, which will require to be dealt with by the medical and educational experts, we may note some of the facts which the average man may learn to his advantage, if he is to be a friend and comrade to the victims of the great war.

Prominent all through the conference was the importance of a just psychology of the wounded. The old-fashioned therapy, which viewed a patient as a deranged physical mechanism, is discredited. As Pascal said, he is a reed that thinks, and if he is to be rehabilitated his mental processes must be reckoned with. It is especially important to remember this, for the very multitude of the disabled, and the necessity of haste in recruiting them into the ranks of the producer is apt to bring about a cold mechanical efficiency of medical and pedagogical treatment which will fail because it overlooks the essential quality of the material it deals with. The organism of a mutilated or enfeebled man is not simply an assemblage of lungs, legs and liver, but rather a complex of emotions, intelligence and will. His hopes, his fears, his joys, his self-respect and individually require a more subtle and discerning skill than do his sightless eyes or his truncated arm.

The first critical moment arrives when the man in the base hospital begins to suspect that he will never again "carry on" as a whole human being. The surgeons who are familiar with him at that early stage of his disablement urge that he cannot be encouraged to take an interest in his future too soon, lest the seed of despair be lodged in his heart. They would anticipate the full realization which will come with returning strength that he is no more to be the man he was, and the giving up of hope that he may again ever take his place as a man among men in the battle of life. Those who deal with him at this time should have developed in the highest degree the faculty of making vital individual contacts with their charges. This is doubly necessary for men who have passed their youth, for the twenties are a more hopeful age than the later thirties and forties. With the older soldiers in hospital the utmost care must be exercised.

Then succeeds the period of convalescence in hospitals. He is then in a peculiarly impressionable state of mind and must not be permitted to become depressed and hopeless by being left in idleness. Hence occupational work is furnished him, the immediate object being to keep him occupied rather than to prepare him for future employment. Yet it is frequently found that his choice of a future vocation is influenced by the task with which he fills the hours of recovery. Some latent ability in him, hitherto unsuspected, may be disclosed. Or, his wishes may become bent towards some new occupation. Here vocational guidance is required, for it is often found that the man's choice, if he is left to himself, is quite an unsuitable one. Very many men, when they become disabled, develop a repugnance to their former occupations. They think upon the intimate unpleasantnesses of their old trades. Some far-off industry seems fair and desirable. The moulder who has seen the well-dressed clerks in the office of the plant where he used to work thinks he should like to become a bookkeeper, so that he can wear good clothes and work in neat surroundings. He forgets how impossible it is now to acquire the schooling he missed when he was a boy. A wise and trusted friend is needed who will point out to him the advantage of using as much as possible of the skill and knowledge he possesses, and the wisdom of keeping as close as may be to his former occupation rather than flying from it to something where he has all to learn. This is the constant policy of the vocational adviser, and his

success is shown in the fact that forty-six per cent. turned away soldiers, saying, "We serve no red- of the men fitted with artificial arms or legs at Roehampton Hospital have returned to their old trades or businesses.

The power of suggestion is universally recognized as being of great importance in these cases. Military discipline is gone with its "Do this, and he doeth it." Compulsion is to be avoided, and something more gentle and persuasive takes its place. The individual case should be studied in apparently casual interviews. The potency of example is employed. At Roehampton, in the suburbs of London, where the new artificial limbs are fitted and tried out, a corps of men is kept who have proved to be adepts in the dexterous use of artificial limbs. These men stimulate the desire and will of the patient to equal or surpass some other men, and to approach the extraordinary skill and dexterity of the special corps itself. There you may see men with their right arms off at the shoulder playing golf with a sure aim, or chopping wood. Men with both arms off ride on bicycles. Men with both legs off have no difficulty in going up and down stairs. One such rides a bicycle.

One of the dangers lurks in the period of waiting which must sometimes be incurred while vacancies are made in the hospitals where the new limbs are provided. Chained to a dull boarding-house by his lack of a leg, or eating his heart out as he walks the streets with an empty sleeve, many a man is in peril of reaching a depth of despondency from which he can be rescued with difficulty.

Another danger is in blind alley occupations. To learn a trade and find no job awaiting one is just the thing to depress the spirits of the adventurer into civil life from his military hospital. It is thus undesirable to train a man for a munitions job, under the lure of high wages. He should be led to choose a job which will provide for him during all his future life.

It is foreseen that after demobilization the pinnacle upon which the veteran of the great war is now exalted will certainly be lowered. The sentiment which is now active will lag and cease. Not

in our generation, it may be predicted, will it be as it was a few years since, when the barnmaids coats here." But the freshness of the emotion is sure to fade. The very number of the returned soldiers will lessen the interest taken in them, for when the unusual becomes common, it ceases to attract attention. They will continually tend to be judged by the same standards as are applied to other men, and left to shift for themselves as best they may, like other men. It is thus desirable that the most should be made of the present interest in them. The nation should be committed to a permanent system of support and provision for those who will continue to require help. And these who are to become altogether competent for the hurly-burly of common life should be fitted for their re-entrance into civilian occupations as soon and as adequately as possible.

It is interesting to read that the problem of the one-armed man is the most serious which confronts those in charge of the training. The man who has lost one or even both of his legs has many chances of work. Modern artificial legs are such wonderful contrivances that many men find themselves handicapped very little, even when they wear two of them. But despite the still more marvellous mechanical construction of the arms there are greater limitations to their use. Flexibility of fingers cannot be gained, and hence the field of occupations open to men wearing artificial arms is limited. It has been suggested that certain occupations suitable for such cripples should be set apart for them by law so long as there are sufficient men to fill them, who are thus handicapped. Such occupations are accounting in all its branches, switchboard work, and the running of certain machines.

In connection with the Conference a number of visits were paid to convalescent and training hospitals of various sorts. A common feature of them all was the beauty of their surroundings. Most of them were private residences turned over to the Government by their owners. Not one of them looked like an "institution." The outlook from the windows was invariably cheerful, and the gardens about these "stately homes of England" were delightful places in which to lie in a cot or through which to stroll on the arm of a comrade or over the lawns of which to experiment on a new mechanical leg. Many of the men, when spoken to, remarked on the effect the beauty of their surroundings produced on their spirits. Cheerfulness, bravery and hope were the unfailing impressions created by these hospitals. Here is a lesson for countries where beautiful homes and gardens are not so plentiful as in England.

## Peace Talk Must Not Injure Loan's Prospects

Canada needs the money, no matter if the war ended now—Great cost of war must be met

Subscriptions totalling \$500,000,000 are wanted for the second Victory Loan. The war is not yet over. Indeed, the Allies are to-day making greater military efforts than they ever did before. At no other time since the outbreak of war has the fighting on the West front been so severe. From the Vosges to the North Sea it is a continuous line of fire. All this means a huge expenditure of money. To-day the Allies are spending more than ever.

It is a mistake to conclude that because the Central Powers are cracking and sending out peace feelers indicating great distress, that the fighting is about to cease. Cease it would quickly, if Germany would accept the terms of the Allies as did Bulgaria; but, as far as can be learned, Germany is not yet prepared to do this. She is not ready to make reparation for her past crimes, or to give adequate guarantees for her future good conduct. So it may be taken for granted that the war will continue until Germany is brought to her knees.

### BIG TASKS AFTER PEACE.

Even if the war were to end within the next few weeks the \$500,000,000 asked for would still be needed. Competent authorities say that it would take at least 18 months to bring home and demobilize all the troops, for they can only be brought back in proportion as the tonnage is available. At the present time the monthly expenditure for pay and allowances alone amounts to \$14,000,000, so it is easy to see that if it took 18 or 20 months to demobilize the troops the pay for this period would probably exceed \$150,000,000. The bill to date for ocean and land trans-

port has been \$34,500,000, so that possibly over \$20,000,000 would be required to transport the soldiers home. So even if peace were to come almost at once it would probably cost \$225,000,000 to demobilize the troops. Here is nearly half of the \$500,000,000 asked for.

### ADVANCES TO INDUSTRIES.

But millions are wanted for purposes other than the maintaining of the army. Canada to-day is exceedingly prosperous, but this prosperity is very largely attributable to the advances made by the Dominion Government to certain industries, which advances were made possible through the 1917 Victory Loan. For some months the Imperial Munitions Board, which has placed over \$1,200,000,000 worth of war orders in Canada, has been receiving advances totalling over \$20,000,000 a month. Last year nearly \$100,000,000 were advanced to finance the wheat crop; while over another \$100,000,000 were required to finance the sale of beef, pork and other agricultural products to Great Britain. An advance of \$10,000,000 to the Imperial Munitions Board enabled it to award contracts for \$25,000,000 worth of wooden ships, and this shipbuilding programme has been extended to include steel ships so that to-day contracts for 90 ships have been awarded, at a cost of nearly \$67,000,000.

It is the intention of the Dominion Government to make even larger advances to certain industries during the coming year. What it will do in this respect, of course, depends largely on the response to

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