

MILITARY HOSPITALS COMMISSION BULLETIN

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BULLETIN OF INFORMATION

ISSUED BY

THE MILITARY HOSPITALS COMMISSION OF CANADA

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REPORT OF MILITARY HOSPITALS COMMISSION.

The Military Hospitals Commission was formed at the instance of the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Sir Robert L. Borden, P.C., G.C.M.G., by Order in Council, dated June 30, 1915, its powers being extended by Order in Council, dated October 12, 1915. Following are some of the clauses of the Commission's charter:—

1. That a Commission, hereafter to be called the "Military Hospitals and Convalescent Homes Commission," the short title of which shall be the "Military Hospitals Commission," be appointed to deal with the provision of Hospital accommodation and Military Convalescent Homes in Canada, for Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who return invalided from the front, and for Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Men invalided while on active service in Canada, Bermuda, or elsewhere.

2. That the Commission be empowered to select Medical and Nursing Staffs, and to appoint such other personnel as may be needed for the management of Hospitals and Homes; provided that a general schedule of pay and allowances be submitted for approval by the Governor in Council.

3. That it be empowered to recommend to the Governor in Council any expenditure which it may consider necessary for the treatment and care of the sick and wounded, including the purchase of supplies and equipment, or for the organization, administration and maintenance of Hospitals and Homes and to expend any monies for the purposes and to the amount authorized from time to time by the Governor in Council.

4. That it be empowered to call in the aid of any Department of the Federal Administration; in particular to use the machinery of the Militia Department, and where desirable, to draw on that Department for supplies, stores and equipment and to utilize the services of Divisional and District Staffs.

5. That any expenditure incurred by the Commission under the authority of the Governor in Council be made a charge against the War Appropriation Vote, or when that ceases to be operative, against any other available appropriation made by Parliament for the purpose.

6. That it be empowered to accept such funds, bequests and legacies as may be given or devised by individuals or Corporations or others, with authority, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, to make all expenditure, and to administer any funds, bequests or legacies on behalf of such members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, as in the judgment of the Commission may be entitled thereto, and for the purpose of carrying out such objects and purposes as may be determined by the Commission.

7. That it be empowered to deal with the question of employment for members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on their return to Canada, and to co-operate with Provincial Governments and others, for the purpose of providing employment as may be deemed necessary.

The Commission early recognized that its work fell under three main headings:—

(a) The provision of Convalescent Hospitals and Homes in different parts of the Dominion.

(b) The provision of vocational training for those who through their disability incurred on active service, would be unable to follow their previous occupations.

(c) The establishment of the necessary machinery for the provision of employment for those who require vocational training and for those who will return during and at the conclusion of the war.

Convalescent Hospitals and Homes.

It is a matter for congratulation that offers were received by the Commission from all parts of Canada, of Public Institutions and Private Houses, a large proportion without any charge for rental, for Convalescent Home purposes. In view of the limited number of wounded and invalided men returning during the summer of 1915, it was not found possible to accept more than a few of these offers. The places selected were decided upon on account of their location and their adequacy to meet requirements, consideration being given to the number of men it would be possible to accommodate in each building. At first it was thought that a large number of small Convalescent Homes would be the best method of meeting the situation. As the numbers returning increased, however, it was found that these isolated and scattered homes would not make for the most efficient and economical administration. It was thought that a majority of the men would require rest and recreation, whereas experience has shown that active therapeutic and orthopaedic treatment is necessary. Hence, many of the offers of Homes which have been received, and for which the Commission is deeply grateful, will not be accepted.

It must not be presumed, however, that the Commission is relying to any large extent upon private philanthropy for the establishment, equipment and maintenance of the Convalescent Homes, though it has welcomed the assistance tendered by various organizations and by public spirited citizens throughout the Dominion. There are many people who have been unable to contribute directly to the prosecution of the war, who have been glad of the opportunity to do something for the men who have suffered in the defence of our national liberties. The work of looking after the returned men has, in many cases, provided an excellent outlet for these activities. The saving of expense to the Government is a comparatively small matter. The men in the Convalescent Homes are maintained, and their pay also continues. The Commission realizes fully its responsibility to see that every opportunity is given to those who return wounded or invalided to recover to the fullest extent in the shortest possible time. Where electric and other apparatus is likely to facilitate this, such installations are being made.

The Hospitals and Homes at present in operation, together with the accommodation available in these institutions, are as follows:—

Ross Military Convalescent Hospital, Sydney, N.S. Accommodation 45. Provided by Mr. and Mrs. J. K. L. Ross, who have also paid the entire cost of maintenance since the Home was opened.

Parks Military Convalescent Hospital, St. John, N.B.—Accommodation 35. Lent to the Commission, rent free, by Mrs. Louisa Parks, of St. John. A large proportion of the equipment has been provided by the Womens' Canadian Club of St. John, assisted by the local Returned Soldiers' Aid Committee.