

Following a recommendation of the 1922 parliamentary committee, P.C. 1581 was passed on August 5 of that year authorizing a grant of \$10,000 to the Last Post Fund for the purpose of organizing branches in the provinces and to assist in the burials of destitute veterans of Canada and her allies for whom no other provision was made. The annual grant gradually increased as the number of deaths increased until, for 1939-40, it was \$85,000.

Vocational Training

I believe it is generally accepted that Canada was the first country in the world to adopt vocational training as a rehabilitative measure for discharged members of her armed forces.

A beginning was made as early as 1915 through efforts to relieve the tedium of hospitalization by the introduction of interesting and useful occupations. In the early stages there was some overlapping between the theories of occupational therapy and vocational training. I believe that the original impulse was founded on recognition of the therapeutic value of some practical occupation. Soldiers, however, had a tendency to regard as frivolous the knitting and embroidery tasks set by well-meaning enthusiasts and the idea developed that occupations provided for hospital patients should as far as possible be of a kind that would prove useful in after life.

Gradually the two policies or theories drew apart. Medical men and hospital authorities drew a clear line of distinction between occupations provided for their therapeutic value and those which constituted useful and practical training for trades or business.

Beyond saying that the Military Hospitals Commission showed at an early stage its appreciation of the value of the modern therapies such as occupational therapy, physio-therapy, mechano-therapy, hydro-therapy, I need make no further allusion in this context to what is essentially a treatment problem.

As soon, however, as the idea of vocational training came into the picture the Military Hospitals Commission set up a special establishment to deal with that problem. Recognition was given to the principle of pension legislation to which I have already referred, that pension should be based on the absolute degree of physical disability rather than the relationship of the disability to earning capacity. Since the effect of a given disability on the earning capacity of two men may be quite different, the policy was adopted of offering vocational training to those who were disabled in such a manner as to preclude them from returning to their former occupations.

While I am by no means satisfied that the vocational training policy in its early phases was highly successful I have every sympathy and admiration for the enlightened, and progressive viewpoint which led to its adoption and to a variety of experimental efforts to develop a practical and useful program.

In the early stages there was undoubtedly an overemphasis on such occupations as shoe-repairing and vegetable gardening. It was thought also that the original plan of establishing special training centres was inadequate and after the experience of a year or two this plan was enlarged to include what is known as shop-training.

A campaign was conducted among employers with a view to having them admit to their shops disabled workmen for the purpose of being trained under actual working conditions. The department undertook responsibility for the payment of training allowances and made every effort to have the industry agree to give the man employment when the training course had reached a point acceptable to the department and the employer.

The facilities of business colleges, technical schools and similar institutions with established records of success were also utilized.