

RETURNED SOLDIERS—(Contd.)

liabilities. When that test is appreciated and applied to a total of some 250,000 men, then the size of the sheet you are dealing with will be realized and its enormous bearing on Canada's account with posterity will be understood.

But how are we to ensure that every available asset shall be conserved? Is there any practicable suggestion to be offered, and are we not, through our Militia Department, our Military Hospitals Commission, our Provincial Commissions, our Khaki League and other voluntary organizations dealing effectively with the matter? I think at present that our endeavors are too spasmodic and not sufficiently co-ordinated. There should, for one thing, be more thorough co-ordination in respect to Canadian soldiers between our authorities in Canada and England than there is at present. Work begun there should be continued and extended here, and the whole endeavor should be the replacement of these men in civil life as self-respecting, self-supporting members of the community. Some men will have to be completely taken care of, and it will be not only a duty but a pleasure and a pride for Canada to see that her heroes want nothing, but the number of absolute dependents can be reduced to a minimum, and for his own sake, as well as for the sake of the community, every possible man should be made at least a partial producer.

My point can be no better illustrated than by the work lately commenced at Monks Horton, near Shorncliffe, under Col. Frank Reid, D. of R. & O., and which I visited a month ago. This is a department of the Canadian Casualty and Assembly Centre, the headquarters of which is at Folkestone. Through the C. C. & A. C. passes every Canadian soldier after his discharge from Hospital, except the blind and the tubercular who are classified automatically by the nature of their disability. After discharge from hospital the soldier goes before a medical board which passes on his fitness for further service. They allot him to Prior Park, Bath, for ultimate discharge to Canada or to Monks Horton for restoration to active service. There are a few men who are utilized for clerical and other service in the various Canadian departments in England, but by far the largest number of men fall into one or other classification, discharge or further active service at the front. Before Monks Horton was established only a small percentage of the casualties went back to the front. Now the large majority are made fit to return to the firing line. How has it been accomplished?

Monks Horton is a great open-air camp, about a dozen miles from Shorncliffe. From the C. C. & A. C. the men go there in motor cars, and most of them can scarcely walk from the cars to their tents on arrival. For the first few days they are given mild setting up exercises and short easy walks, and they are encouraged to use the excellent facilities offered for baseball, tennis and other sports. The men are employed when possible in useful work of various kinds, there are always carpentering, tailoring, boot-making and repairing to be done as well as the usual routine of a large camp. Fresh air, good food and proper exercise soon work their wonderful cures and in a couple of weeks, on an average, the men who came in virtually cripples are taking regular drills and long route marches and are ready to go back to the front.

Now, I submit that it is as worth while to rehabilitate men for civil life as it is for military service. The complaint has been made after every war, and it is being made in this, that soldiers are treated as mere fighting machines, fit only for the scrap heap after their military utility is ended. Let us look upon them as potential Canadian assets and bend all our energies to creating them such. I believe that we ought to establish one or more rehabilitation centres in this country on the lines of Monks Horton, ultimately, perhaps, one in every Province, with the object of refitting men for civil life. These centres should be in the country near enough to a city to ensure that availability of medical and educational treatment of which the City is the centre and far enough away to eliminate the attractions and temptations of a city which will interfere with the recovery of the men. The camps should be large and should be so complete in themselves that there should be no excuse for leaving their boundaries, and, of course, military discipline should

be maintained, final discharge taking place from the camps at the end of their treatment and training. If, for instance, a part of the buildings and land of Macdonald College at Ste. Anne de Bellevue could be made available for this purpose in the Province of Quebec it would be a well-nigh ideal situation, for with our severe winters, suitable buildings are essential. Under such auspices any desire to go on the land would be fostered and developed, while men unsuited to agricultural life could be trained for other pursuits and largely absorbed by our great labor market.

Gentlemen, you have honored me by asking me to speak on a big subject. The official programme has divided it into several headings, each heading a problem itself, worth the time allotted to the entire subject. The questions of employment and of hospitals are important because they are matters which we have to deal with now. The Hospital Commission is composed of men of standing and ability who for more than a year have labored with their great undertaking. In this connection I believe that purely military hospitals, as distinguished from convalescent homes, will still have to be provided in Canada, and that we ought to receive back many of our wounded in a less advanced stage of recovery than we get them now. England is full of hospitals, this great push is bringing train loads of wounded into Charing Cross Station every day. There is a wonderful Canadian hospital at Ramsgate called the Granville Special Canadian Hospital, provided by our Government and fitted with appliances which are partly the invention of one of our own Montreal Doctors. Their application to cases abandoned as hopeless has resulted in many wonderful recoveries. Then there are advantages in the treatment of men near their own homes by Canadians and by Canadian doctors who have to stay here. And while speaking of the medical aspect of the question I am going to urge the abolition of the ostrich system of dealing with the subject of venereal disease. That situation is very serious and has to be faced fairly and squarely for the sake of future generations.

Let me plead again for co-operation and co-ordination. Much is being done in England by our own Canadian Medical and Military men, which could well be followed here and we should avail ourselves of their experience and extend in Canada the useful work which often can only be commended over there. Still more is being done in France, where the mental and physical re-equipment of wounded soldiers is proceeding in a scientific manner not yet approached in England. Mr. William Dobell, of Quebec, and Major John L. Todd, M.D., of Montreal, have made exhaustive studies of the French methods, and we hope for definite results from their investigations. No mere questions of economy should deter the Government from dealing effectively with this great problem. Millions have been wasted in the raising of our armies, millions have been lavished, as a free-will offering from the people of Canada upon the dependents of our soldiers. Let us not be niggardly in our treatment of the men who have made Canada's name a glory in the uttermost parts of the earth. Let us see that every man who has done his bit at the front gets a fair show when he comes home. Don't let us classify him as a boozier or loafer because he displays inclinations which may be abnormal in him owing to the terrible experience which he has undergone. Most of us, in his place, would want a drink and a rest too. And it would be a good deal better if we would all agree to go without alcohol if we could thereby remove temptation from the men who have endured so much for us. Let us be willing to have the burdens of this war somewhat evenly distributed. There are many in Montreal who only realize the war when they lick a postage stamp. Don't let the men in the trenches carry the entire load. Let us, every one of us, make our own sacrifices of time, of money, of luxury and of pleasure and do our bit for the common cause. It can never approach what they have done, for all that you or I may offer can never pay the price of a soldier's blood or the cost of a woman's tears. Not then for the sake of giving them a reward, because we can never recompense them for their sacrifice, but because it is the just, sensible and business-like thing to do, let us bend our energies towards making our returned soldiers assets of Canada while they live, as they will be an inspiration to Canada and the Empire as long as Canada and the Empire endure.