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The Repatriation Committee

Now that the war is over, many peace problems must be faced and two—the repatriation of our soldiers and the re-employment of munition workers—demand immediate attention. What is more, both problems are essentially municipal in character, and as such it becomes the duty of each local council to take action, otherwise the conditions of 1915, when unemployment was so general, with all the attendant suffering, that mayors from all over Canada gathered at Ottawa, and urged the Dominion Government to start public works, will be repeated. At that time the situation was saved by the munition orders and recruiting, but thanks to the prowess of our troops there is no longer any necessity for either of these two expedients, and the question comes—what is to be done to find employment for disbanded soldiers and out-of-works during the transition period? That is the period necessary for the changing of war to peace industries, or during the next twelve months, and in particular during the winter.

To our mind the only way the problem of unemployment can be solved is in the carrying on of public works—federal, provincial and municipal—even if it means greater cost to the country, but which in the long run would be infinitely cheaper than the communities having to take care of unemployed families, which will actually be the case if nothing is done. In this matter we welcome the action of the Dominion Government in the appointment of a Repatriation and Employment committee, made up of certain members of the Cabinet who have appointed as Director Mr. J. H. Daly of Ottawa—a happy combination of the business and social doctor. The propaganda of the Committee is in reality a “get-together” movement, and if the plans work out as scheduled, good results should accrue. All the national associations have been invited to co-operate in the work of repatriation, but in particular have the municipal councils, through the Union of Canadian Municipalities, the executive of which have been asked to select four representatives. The delegates selected, and who have expressed their willingness to serve, are the

mayors of Toronto and Ottawa, and the Mayor of a Western City—to be yet selected—and Mr. W. D. Lighthall, K.C., the Hon. Secretary of the Union. In addition to the above gentlemen, Mr. Harry Bragg, of this Journal, has been appointed as special municipal representative on the staff of the Director of Repatriation. The principal work of the municipal representatives will be in bringing about the closest co-operation between the municipal councils and the repatriation committee, especially in pushing forward local public works, etc., in order to find all the employment possible for local out-of-works. In the work of Repatriation and Employment, then, the municipal councils have a great responsibility and opportunity. Because of the Mayors and Aldermen being in daily contact with the citizens they are in the best position to know local conditions, and as such are specially qualified to know the baneful influence of general unemployment on the life of their respective communities, and will naturally do all in their power to fight against it. It is obvious, then, that any scheme to create employment, during the winter months in particular, will have the hearty support of all local councils.

A TRIBUTE TO OUR DEAD SOLDIERS.

Rudyard Kipling's choice of an epitaph for British Empire soldiers who lost their lives in France is particularly appropriate. It is taken from Ecclesiastes, namely, “Their Name Achieveth for Evermore,” and it would be hard to find a better tribute to those who have gone West in the cause of justice. But while England is honouring the great dead by keeping their graves in order, Canada, as a nation, is doing nothing for these soldiers who, wounded unto death, came home to die. The series of articles by Mr. Hair that are appearing in this Journal are a strong indictment of our apathy in the matter. Such a spirit of ungratefulness cannot be eliminated too quickly, and the sooner the Dominion Government take action the better for our peace of mind.