

AMERICA PREPARES TO SALVAGE HER WAR CRIPPLES

Federal Board of Vocational Education, Led by Cabinet Officers, Has Commission of Stupendous Importance in Reclaiming Maimed Man Power and Fitting Them Again for Useful Positions

BY CHARLES W. DUKE.

MORE than 5000 instruments will be necessary for the rehabilitation of our war cripples when we shall have placed in the field the Army of 5,000,000 men that General Leonard Wood and other notable military experts deem necessary for the overthrow of the Hun on the western battlefield in Europe. Patriots who want to do something toward winning the war other than buying Liberty bonds, knitting socks and sweaters or doing Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. work may find ample opportunities in the work now being organized under supervision of the Federal board for vocational education, provided they are gifted along the lines of occupational therapy.

Already the vanguard of the American wounded are arriving in this country. As the war continues, the steady flow of wounded back from Europe will increase. It is safe to assume that our casualties will be on a par with those of the Canadian overseas expeditions. Canadian experiences estimate that 10 per cent of the men sent overseas are returned unfit for service. Thirty per cent of these are in the hospitals at one time. This means that for every million men sent overseas 100,000 will come back permanently disabled for further military service and approximately 30,000 will be in hospitals at one time.

Need of Vocational Instructors. Four instructors are estimated in Canada to every 100 convalescent patients. The men go to the shops for instruction in repairs, and these classes run from 15 to 20 men. Allowing four teachers to every 100 men, it is seen that 1200 occupational therapists are necessary for every million men overseas. If the United States maintains an overseas army of 5,000,000 men, as General Wood proposes, and which certainly seems necessary as the German drive continues this summer and England drafts her older men, then a little army here at home of 6000 instructors will be needed to handle the rehabilitation of these wounded men, who must be returned to industrial life to keep our whole scheme of national life intact.

It is distasteful to write of the wounded; no one likes to pause over the picture of distress. However, duty and love of country compel a full and frank discussion of this subject, just as similar motives prompted organization of the Federal Board of Vocational Education, headed by Secretary of Labor Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture Houston, Secretary of Commerce Redfield and Commissioner of Education P. P. Claxton. The world war has resolved itself into a survival of the fittest. Germany has overpowered little nations like Belgium, Serbia and Roumania. She has strangled Russia and at the present moment is attempting to kill off France and Great Britain before the United States can get fully into the conflict. Man power, properly armed, will win the war. Should Germany get to the English Channel or into Paris this summer it will be because she has staked her all on a master throw of the dice in human millions cast recklessly into the caldron of war. It is now pretty generally acknowledged that only by sending in millions of men can the United States succor its allies and hurl the brutal back upon his own lair.

What Other Nations Are Doing. England, France, Italy, Belgium, Canada, Australia—every power engaged in war, including Germany and Austria in a very large way—have taken up the rehabilitation of their wounded. It has to be done in this country and is now being done under the auspices of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, and it is very vitally necessary that the subject be publicly discussed and the entire Nation prepared for the re-education and replacement of the wounded soldiers and sailors in industrial life. American efficiency now is pitted against German efficiency. And here is how German efficiency takes care of her war cripples. She uses 15 per cent of her disabled men back of the lines, while the remaining 15 per cent are made entirely self-supporting. In Germany, too, it is provided there shall be no waste of time on useless occupations. The Krupp firm at Essen has established a curative workshop for disabled men under medical supervision.

The plan is to make every man self-supporting, says the Hon. Herbert Corey in discussion of the subject. He was in Germany. "They make him self-supporting, no matter how little of him may be left. It is infinitely better for the man and for Germany when the war ends. It is recognized that the work of every hand will be needed. The man who has but one hand must be fitted to do his part for his country's sake, if not for his own."

That is typically German. "For his country's sake." The wounded man must work again regardless of his own individuality; he belongs to the state and the state must survive. Of necessity, but in a vastly different spirit, every other nation pursues the same policy, believing that if the war should end in economic exhaustion, that nation may ultimately triumph which is best able to use over again her men. Belgium, whose depletion in men has been the greatest, was the first nation successfully to use over again her men. Before the war was better trained than Belgium. At her big re-education center, Fort Velles, 43 trades are taught. The man who is only self-supporting, but in addition has paid back to the Belgian government the entire capital cost of installation. It is only in America that this question of rehabilitating our wounded squarely in the face and prepare now to take care of them. They are already being brought back under the banners of the Red Cross. Dominion authorities figure that the number of returned wounded this year will average from 1200 to 1500 a month, or between 12,000 and 18,000 for the year. Our disabled will probably be very much less this first year, although the number depends, of course, on the grand total we are able to land in France with available tonnage. Should Secretary Baker make good his prophecy that 1,500,000 American troops will go to Europe this year, then, on the Canadian estimates, we may expect 30,000 war cripples the first year, and then 100,000 more for every additional 1,000,000 men sent to Europe.

It is interesting to note right here the wonderful strides made by surgery in cutting down war mortality and making possible the reclamation to society of the maimed of the battlefield. In France the ratio of casualties was highest during the first year of the war, in which the battles of Charleroi and the Marne were fought. In each six months of the years 1915 and 1916 the ratio of casualties to men mobilized in the French army declined from 2.55 per cent in the first six months of 1915 to 1.47 per cent in the last half of that year.

Mortality Percentages. Taking account of the Canadian statement that 10 per cent of all the men sent overseas are to come back physically unfit for further military service, it must be remembered that the mortality is in no wise in this proportion. It has been found that the killed in action and died of wounds have not exceeded one-fifth of the total casualties. Four-fifths of the wounded survive. Some of these recover completely, developing 100 per cent of their former vocational efficiency. Some recover efficiency, providing they be given the vocational training required to overcome their specific handicap; some are incapable of any sort of vocational training of any kind.

Military experts in this country agree that the killed in action and died of wounds have never at any time in this war exceeded 20 per cent of the total casualties. In 1914, when the Germans drove on Paris, the French lost in casualties more than 50 men in dead for every 1000 men engaged. Through the wonderful advances in surgery that has

ing to be swelled to thousands in 1918, it is for the rehabilitation of these wounded that the Government and the Nation now must give its undivided attention.

Three Phases of the Work. The popular idea that every disabled man is a cripple is disproved by figures of the inter-allied conference held in Paris last year. They show only 167 cases of amputation in every 1000 disabilities; consequently 833 cases in every 1000 are injuries of other kinds. The men are classified according to their most serious disability, but in 14 per cent or 15 per cent of all cases there are two or three or even four injuries. Blindness is given as low as less than 1 per cent of all disabilities and the French figures give the percentage of

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Recommendations for 1918. Dr. Thomas W. Salmon, medical director of the National committee for mental hygiene, states that on the basis of 1,000,000 men overseas the country may expect 250 insane soldiers per month. Cimpare that with civil life. In a recent year there were 60,769 inmates in insane asylums in this country. This is three times as many as the maximum number of men expected to return to Canada during the year. In that same year 1,532,000 patients were treated in public and philanthropic hospitals in the United States and 2,440,000 treated in free dispensaries. A total of 4,352,000 patients of this number is double the number of disabled men returned that Canada will receive on her maximum estimate. So it would appear that either men go to war or stay at home, death roves among them and disease robs them of their health or normal mentality. In this connection we are reminded of the fact that recently the daily dispatches related the fact that an American mother of five sons who had given four boys for service in France was robbed of the fifth by a motorcar accident here at home.

Accepting the Canadian ratios as a proportion to be carried out in our own casualties, it is found that out of a first force of 1,000,000 troops sent abroad they will be classified for vocational rehabilitation as follows:

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In their recommendations to Congress for a general working plan the Federal Board for Vocational Education declares that immediate provision should be made for the training during 1918 of 20,000 wounded men. In the second year of fighting the discharges from the military hospitals will provide each month between 3000 and 4000 candidates for vocational training and in each month of the third year approximately 600 candidates.

Before the March drive in France there were approximately 13,000,000 wounded and crippled soldiers in the belligerent countries of Europe, including 3,000,000 cases of amputation. In Germany alone it was reported, 500,000 men were under treatment in hospitals. The number of leg amputations in a year totaling 18,000. As a result of Hindenburg's latest drive it is certain that the 15,000,000 wounded and crippled has been increased many thousands more, including all armies engaged. Looking the problem squarely in the face, it is certain that our casualty lists of hundreds in 1918 are go-

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Teaching Them Many Trades. There are three phases of this project of vocational rehabilitation; first, invalid occupation; second, occupational therapy, and third, vocational education. The critical time is that period between the time when the disabled soldier or sailor enters the hospital and his final placement in industry, commerce or agriculture. Occupational therapy is described as the science of healing by occupation, and curative workshop the shop where the convalescing patients are given occupational treatment. What is done during the convalescent stage forms the vital link between medical treatment and vocational education or economic adjustment. During this period ambition, the desire for self-support and economic usefulness are to be fostered, replacing the despair, apathy and dependence often impeding recovery. Reports from abroad show that a few patients take the attitude that they have done their part and that society must look out for them. However, the majority of men, it has been found, have self-respect in abundance and are keen to make themselves useful again in the working world. The matter of teaching these men becomes a grave problem. As pointed out at the inter-allied conference, "the blind must be taught to be blind; to accept their lot as an inconvenience, not as a disability. Intelligent sympathy, not pity, will assist them in becoming independent. Occupational therapy, which helps the patients to recover in every way by creating in them the desire to make the best of their conditions and by teaching them new trades or greater experience in old ones, thus becomes of vital importance in mending the wounds of war for the future."

There are many things that the war cripples may be taught in the way of industry. Certain it is that if many influential leaders interested in this work have their way American convalescents will not be turned to making artificial flowers, toys and "killing" pastimes. Experience in Europe has proved that whatever ambition wounded men had for practical work was paralyzed when they worked under trifles. The result was that men's infirmities were capitalized and their work made dependent on public beneficence. Germany will not permit it. Her wounded are put to work in the mills and factories. And elsewhere in Europe and Canada it has been found that when a cripple learns that he really can perform a "man's job" he takes to it with great vigor. His joy is unconfined in the reaction after that first knowledge of injury and first supposition that he was useless for the future.

Here are jobs that war cripples can

do. The Dilution of Labor Bulletin of the British Ministry of Munitions states that the handicapped men have passed from training into employment as gauge makers, tool setters, tool turners, tool hardeners, viewers, molders, millers and coremakers, skilled turners, fitters, capstan hands, area erectors and assemblers, sheetmetal workers and press workers. In Canada the men have become concrete and sanitary inspectors as a result of training. In Italy the men are learning to operate motor tractors instead of plows. In England they are learning to make and repair shoes by machinery instead of the old-fashioned and overcrowded trade of cobbling. In Germany the director of the Royal School for Machine Building in Cologne trained 20,000 war cripples to be expert oxy-

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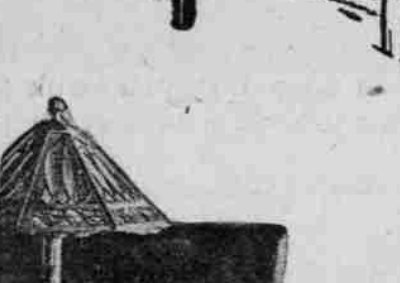
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"When I came back from the front I was not able to read or write. When the M. H. C. opened a machine shop at McGill I was decided to take up the course. I had never worked on a machine before, so I had to learn, but I stuck to it, and while I got my discharge was able to secure my job. I received \$21.10 per week when I started. The foreman told me this week he was going to put me on a new machine and this would mean more money to me. I expect to get \$30 a week. If it had not been for this school I never would have been in the place I am today. Before the war I was driving a team at \$15 per week. I hope all the returned boys will see the chances they have in the school and make the most of them."

Private W. Rollerson, before the war, was a \$70 stenographer; now he is a custom-house stenographer at \$1000.

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