

The War Veteran's Problems

The dominion government has apparently completed plans to establish fifteen rehabilitation centres for veterans, the first of which will be opened in Toronto soon. The date of its opening here will depend on the speed with which a properly qualified staff can be assembled. These centres are to provide the various kinds of assistance required by service men and women for their adjustment into civilian life.

It is hoped that proper care will be taken in the selection of the staff for these centres. It is the personnel of a social agency, particularly of this type, which determines its success. On its services depend the welfare and happiness, now and in the future, of the veterans and their families. It would seem wise if one or two centres were selected to conduct experimental demonstration services in order to establish the most satisfactory methods. It would help also if those who are to direct and supervise the work were to spend a brief period studying the model rehabilitation centres in nearby American communities.

Of immediate value to workers in this field is the report in the current Survey Mid-monthly, by Mr. Louis Bennett, director of the New York City Veterans' Service Centre. For the past five months this centre has been collecting data on the types of problems for which returned men and women come for help. From 15,000 carefully compiled case records, research workers have charted the areas of veterans' difficulties and the services required. The report emphasizes this point: that employment is not the chief worry which confronts the veteran on his return home. Therefore those who are assigned to help him must know more than is required at present of a selective service officer.

Among the problems for which veterans have come most frequently for help are those involving their adjustment with their families. These problems, wrote Mr. Bennett, fall into several general types. The families of the psychotic or emotionally disturbed veteran and the physically wounded or crippled men require advice on how to receive, understand and treat the veteran at home. There are youngsters who have grown up to manhood while in service and are unable to return to former parental control. Their parents require careful instruction and possibly supervision for some time. Young men who married while in service need advice and help in assuming their family responsibil-

ities. There are men whose children grew up during their absence and all need to be accustomed to one another. There is the group of young persons who enlisted to get away from an unhappy home situation and who dread returning to it. All these problems are in addition to retraining, education and job-placement for which service men want advice and practical aid.

Experience in this field has shown that a local community cannot give a complete, planned service unless the rehabilitation committee represents all the groups that are interested and can help. It should include representatives from the veterans' organizations, industry, trade unions, health, social and educational agencies, as well as from the federal, provincial and civic governments.

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