

VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICIALS PREPARED FOR HEAVY PERIOD

Staff of Department Scattered Across
Country to Number in Vicinity of 12,000

Ottawa, Aug. 30.—(CP)—The Department of Veterans Affairs, which came with peace into a new and vital prominence, has stepped across the threshold into the heaviest period of its career, roughly the next two years.

Staff Increases

In the year since its birth as successor to the disbanded Pensions and Health Department, its staff has grown from 5,137 to 8,200 and, Deputy Minister W. S. Woods predicted in an interview to-day, it will continue to grow until its nurses, its counsellors, its administrators and all others of its staff, scattered across the country, number in the vicinity of 12,000.

From the experiences of the last post-war period, Mr. Woods said, its activities will probably reach their peak about midsummer of 1947 but from that peak they will diminish rapidly.

The pace of its work would be determined to a great extent by the rate at which the services discharged their men to make them available for the gratuities, benefits, training, insurance, and other facilities that fall within the powers of the department.

Can Handle Task

The department now was in the position of having a staff fully trained for its job on the basis of the 250,000 men and women already discharged from the three services out of the more than 1,000,000 who have served in this war. With the anticipated influx, it was quite capable of handling any increase brought on by demobilization.

The new phase into which it had already passed was characterized by the fact that its discharge centres, established in cities across Canada, were beginning to deal with "fit" men.

In the interview, these, briefly, were some of the points Mr. Woods made:

1. On a recent trip overseas to interview applicants for key, "top-notch" departmental positions, more than 1,000 army and air force men applied, of whom 30 were chosen. Another 40 were chosen in a similar hunt among veterans in Canada. The applicants ranged from privates to major-generals but rank made no difference in selection.

2. He found on that trip that servicemen overseas "know our program well."

Distribute Pamphlet

3. More than 1,000,000 copies of a pamphlet *Back to Civil Life*, outlining the steps in rehabilitation and the available facilities, have been distributed and the army "is crying for more."

4. It is hoped that some 30 per cent. of veterans will take either vocational or educational training. Among last war veterans, the figure was only eight per cent., largely because only injured or wounded men were eligible. A tragic boomerang of that fact was the disclosure in a survey made in 1930 that among war veterans made jobless by the depression the big majority had no skills.

5. The department's powers were entirely flexible. "We are making changes every day by regulation and order-in-council" but none of these affect the major pillars of the rehabilitation scheme.

6. Among veterans there have been "no general complaints of inadequacies" in the rehabilitation program. The great majority of the men seemed satisfied.

HAMILTON SPECTATOR

AUG 30 1945

#149 War: European 1939:

Canada-Veterans

115-010-001