

## PROBLEMS OF RE-ESTABLISHMENT.

The greatest problem before the Canadian people to-day is the restoration to fitting places in civil life of the three hundred thousand fine fighting men who constituted Canada's overseas army when the armistice was signed. The process of restoring the men mustered out because of wounds, sickness, and other causes during the years from 1914 to 1918 was not nearly so serious as that which confronts the country to-day. The returned men have been coming back at the rate of from 20,000 to 40,000 monthly, and it is no reflection upon the leaders of commerce and industry in Canada to say that the process of absorption causes friction in many business establishments. The wonder is that it has not caused more.

Now that most of the soldier members of the Dominion Parliament have felt constrained as patriotic Canadians to back up the Government in its declaration against a further gratuity of \$2,000 to all men who served in France, and of smaller sums to those who served in Canada and England, the various soldiers' organizations should settle down to a consideration of the problems of re-establishment as they affect various classes of returned men, and map out practical programs for the settlement of these problems. Everyone favors the greatest possible liberality to the dependents of the dead and to disabled men and their families. A review of pensions and allowances in these cases would show many inequalities and injustices that ought to be rectified speedily. For the healthy and fit work must be found. If it can be shown that returned men go about idle because no work is to be had, provision must be made to carry these men and their dependents through the period of involuntary unemployment. The honor of Canada must not be dragged in the dust by the spectacle of returned soldiers, unable to procure work, applying for charity either from individual citizens or from public relief institutions.

Among the classes of returned men for whom something should be done as a matter of simple justice are the Imperial Reservists who were resident in Canada when war broke out, and who have returned to their homes in this country, after from four to five "whisks" service, very much worse off financially than when they left. Their claim is presented in the following letter from a Toronto veteran who has over three years at the front to his credit:

"Why should the conscript soldier who got to France before the armistice, but never saw a shot fired in anger, receive \$2,000 of our cash?"

"Take the case of a British Reservist who answered the first call in 1914 from Earls Court, where as a Canadian he had built a small home. He served for five years at a shilling a day, the British pay. Coming back to Canada, what does he get? We will say he lives next door to the draftee Canadian who was sent to England for his training in 1918. The draftee was not required in France until after the losses of April and August, 1918. In the latter case he got to France in time to do the Grand Parade to the Rhine, and comes back with a war service button.

"The demand of veterans who would take from the widows and orphans, and from all taxpayers of Canada, including the Imperial Reservist, to raise cash with which to pay such chaps \$2,000 is simply absurd.

"We won the war, but I as a veteran do not want any cash won in that way. Like many of my chums, I am a citizen and a taxpayer of Canada as well as a soldier, and I know that every dollar raised by Canada comes from our pockets, and that we cannot hoist ourselves by pulling on our own boot-straps.

"We all want a chance to get a good job—as good or better than we left behind us. If the chaps doing all this talking were busy working they wouldn't have so much time to spend looking for so much easy money.

"Again I ask, Why should a conscript get \$2,000 of our taxes because he was forced to go to France when the war was finished?"

This letter brings into relief the fact that there are in Canada about 14,000 middle-aged men who were called out as Imperial Reservists, who served all through the war, and who now come back to the land of their adoption to find that, although they do not participate in Canadian war gratuities, they will have to take their share of the taxation and the debt burden resulting from the payment of these gratuities. They will remember with bitterness that most of the draftees of whom "Veteran" speaks—who when called upon fought, it is true, with the same courage and tenacity as the volunteers—were at the front only a few weeks, and in some cases a few days, before hostilities ended. For the Imperial veterans who are citizens of Canada, and who fought for over four long years, there has been no gratuity worth while, yet it is seriously proposed to give \$2,000 to men only a few weeks in France.

It would be no more than justice to include all Imperial Reservists who were bona fide citizens of Canada in 1914, and who have returned to make their homes in the Dominion, in the Canadian gratuity scheme. They will have to help pay for the gratuities given to others who have far less claim to

the gratitude of the nation than they themselves can justly advance.

Then there are the students who want temporary aid to secure the education to which they had been looking forward when war snatched them from school and college to fight for the world's freedom. Their point of view is presented in this letter from Mr. A. P. MacCallum of Marmora to the Editor of The Globe:

"Like all other returned men, I have watched with a good deal of interest the polemic between the various groups of returned men and the powers at Ottawa apropos the question of increased gratuities, and in to-day's Globe I saw, over the signature of Mr. B. R. Simpson of Napanee, an elucidation of the matter which is a particularly apt statement of my views in the matter.

"Personally, speaking from my own individual point of view, I don't want anything that savors of gifts or charity, but I do not think any herculean intellect is required to devise a better scheme than the present. I am going to enter October 1st one of Canada's biggest universities, and while I am prepared for the first year's expenses I cannot say where the succeeding years' fees are coming from. Doubtless there are many others in a similar position, and if the Government would arrange to advance this money, I, still speaking individually, would guarantee to repay it, not in twenty years, but in five years from October 1st, 1919. A great deal was made about the land scheme for returned soldiers. If one of them wishes to take up land the money is forthcoming for the purpose. Similarly if he wishes to build a house. But if the man who for any reason is not interested in farming wishes to build up his mind and his store of learning to fit himself for a useful profession his case is totally ignored. This looks to me like class legislation. It goes without saying that agriculture is an important industry, but you cannot build a prosperous country on one industry, and if the Government caters to the farmers alone, where are, for instance, the engineers coming from to build and maintain railways, canals, docks, etc., to open, develop, and operate mines, smelters, and other allied industries, upon which the farmer largely depends for a market for his products? Therefore I would suggest, not to monopolize your space altogether, that some scheme be devised to classify the men according to their needs, capabilities, and aspirations, and not confine their effort to the only two lines open at present, i.e., vocational training or farming."

Mr. MacCallum's letter presents one of the problems of re-establishment that has not received the attention it should have had from the authorities at Ottawa. The British Government, with heavier taxation and debt burdens than our own, has faced and solved the problem of the student-inarms, and has decided to help him not by loans, but by substantial sums that will enable the student to pay his tuition fees. There are many other problems of a similar sort that should be grappled with by the Dominion Government. Most of them need sympathy and understanding in a greater degree than money if a satisfactory settlement is to be arrived at. The country may be counted upon to resist all extravagant demands made in the name of the returned men, but there is a very widespread desire that no Canadian veteran shall be able to say that he returned from the long struggle for the world's freedom to face in his home land injustice and neglect.