

46. Happy re-establishment as a citizen is practicable only if all possible therapeutic measures have been applied to the remedying of the disabled man's physical or mental disability ; if careful and complete investigation has been made into his capacity, or potential capacity given specialized training, to undertake interesting skilled professional, clerical, or other employment ; if every effort is made to assist him to realize his maximum capacity in this respect ; if he is durably placed accordingly ; and, finally, if he is regarded by his employer, workmates, friends and social acquaintances not as a dejected cripple living by the grace of the community, but as a war veteran who, despite his service disability, is, as a result of specialized training and tenacity of purpose, no more a social cripple than the many thousands of worthy citizens with this or that minor physical or mental limitation.

47. Permanent re-establishment presupposes an economic order in which all are assured of a reasonable livelihood and all who are capable of rendering economic service of any prudential kind are guaranteed the means of doing so. Elsewhere in this report the Board's positive interest in realizing such an order is referred to, as are the steps taken by the Board to assist in the establishment of a planning and co-ordinating organization to make this possible.

(iii) The Means of Solution

48. As a general rule the solution of the problem of the disabled man is to be found in an approach which recognizes and provides for definite stages in rehabilitation, each of which presents its typical difficulties. This view involves, therefore, a "right through" technique of assistance, encouragement, and follow-up. Such a technique has been employed by the officers of the Department and the Disabled Servicemen's Re-establishment League.

49. The "right through" method may involve at the appropriate stage in each case : -

- (a) Sympathetic and co-ordinated liaison activity by the Rehabilitation Officer and the Field Officer of the League from the time when the case first becomes a rehabilitation one until the man is satisfactorily and securely re-established ;
- (b) Such special treatment, institutional and otherwise, as may be necessary to effect the physical or mental recovery of the disabled man ;
- (c) Assistance in overcoming other personal or domestic difficulties not connected with the man's disability, but undoubtedly affecting his recovery therefrom ;
- (d) Provision of therapeutic employment and recreational facilities to hasten the transition from unemployability to either normal employability or employability for specially selected work ;
- (e) Provision of special training, either concurrently with therapeutic employment or thereafter ;
- (f) Placement in carefully selected and, as far as possible, permanent employment, and also post-placement contact.

50. The liaison procedure followed by the Department and the League ensures that every ex-serviceman whose case might conceivably present a disability problem is personally interviewed before his service pay ceases. From the time of the first contact until it is possible to record the man's satisfactory establishment he is frequently and helpfully contacted, and any new development or difficulty is discussed with him. The value of "right through" contact of this nature is immeasurable.

51. As commented in the section of this report dealing with treatment, the War Pensions branch of the Social Security Department is providing adequate treatment facilities for ex-servicemen. For example, the more important disabilities already discussed are met by special medical measures, where such are possible. These include periodic specialist examination and prescriptions in tuberculosis, skin conditions, and sight and hearing cases, while clinical facilities for psychiatric cases and balneological treatment for such rheumatoid conditions as it is prescribed for are also provided.

52. The only respect in which the Board has found it necessary to augment the facilities provided by the War Pensions Board and the Health Department has been where special additional occupational therapy or readjustment measures have been necessary.

53. Additional facilities provided by the Board include the treatment, training, and general guidance of all totally blinded or industrially blinded ex-servicemen ; the specialized training and guidance of disabled men in the vocational and recreation centres of the League, and therapeutic employment under the intermediate scheme.

(iv) Special Provision for the Blinded

54. With particular reference to blinded ex-servicemen, the Board found it desirable to make special arrangements, and early in the current year the Fairview Convalescent Home, Mount Eden, was acquired as a temporary training centre and hostel for blinded men. The four ex-servicemen inmates of the Institute for the Blind were transferred to Fairview and, by arrangement with the Institute, the part-time services of a competent instructor in Braille were obtained. The services of a trained female occupational therapist were also obtained, and with the aid of Braille watches and talking books procured by the Board the training and general welfare of blinded ex-servicemen are receiving every consideration.

55. Thus far only eight men have returned totally blinded, while eleven returned and three home-service men have been discharged partially blinded. The training of both totally and partially blinded men at the Fairview Convalescent Home will be pursued with the implicit purpose of getting them to take up avocations in industry. This has been the point in establishing Fairview, for, as is well known, the New Zealand Institute for the Blind ministers to the needs of blind persons who expect to remain inmates of the Institute. Importance is attached to the discovery of suitable occupations for blinded men by means of the occupational survey referred to elsewhere. That such men can be economically employed in industry is proved by the current engagement by a freezing-works establishment of a blinded man who has returned from the present war as well as the employment of blind persons in other industrial concerns.