

may enable a number of men to take advantage of the training who might otherwise be hindered by pecuniary reasons from availing themselves of it. The scheme is applicable to the farm training as well as the technical schools.

Up to the present only a small number of allowances have been applied for, but the scheme is relatively a new one. The Department is taking the initiative in writing to men who *prima facie* appear likely to benefit by training, and I entertain the hope that the scheme will have a marked effect on the number of men qualifying themselves for increased industrial efficiency.

Associated with the question of training for men unable to follow their old occupations is that of allowing men similarly disabled to accept private employment at rates of pay less than those fixed by current awards and agreements. The matter was taken in hand by the Labour Department early in 1916, and under the Order in Council then approved fourteen under-rate permits have been issued by that Department prescribing rates of pay varying from £2 10s. to £1 15s. per week.

SPECIAL TRAINING COLLEGES—ARE THEY DESIRABLE?

During the last few weeks the question of the establishment of special training colleges for disabled men has been urged on the attention of the Department. The gentlemen concerned in this movement have shown most praiseworthy interest in the welfare of our returned men, and have devoted both time and ability to the subject which has engrossed their attention, and which, in so far as it manifests a lively interest in our soldiers, must command the sympathy and respect of us all. I gather from the correspondence which has come under my notice that the promoters of the scheme have in mind the provision of training colleges and farms for men still undergoing hospital treatment, and if this is correct the question more properly appertains to the work of the Department of Public Health than to the Discharged Soldiers' Information Department. So far as the latter Department is concerned, I regret that I cannot at present see my way to support a scheme of the character suggested. The small extent to which existing facilities have been availed of would not, in my opinion, justify the large expense which the institution of special training colleges with expensive buildings, apparatus, and staff would involve. I am supported in this view by the attitude taken up by the Statutory War Pensions, &c., Committee, which has been established by legislation in the United Kingdom, and which amongst other functions deals with the training and employment of disabled men. In addressing its Local Committees on this particular subject it urges them to make use as far as possible of existing institutions, specifically mentioning the technical schools, and adds that "as the number of men for whom training is needed will diminish year by year after the war, expenditure on the provision of buildings and apparatus which will only be required for a temporary period should be kept within strict limits."

In addition to the foregoing, I doubt whether an institution of the character proposed, involving a considerable measure of control and discipline, would be appreciated by the men for whose benefit it is designed. I am inclined to think that the younger men would before very long find the necessary restraint distasteful and irksome. In this opinion I am supported by the views of a prominent member of the medical profession in New Zealand—one who I may say has had special opportunities of forming an opinion through daily contact with the inmates of one of our large convalescent homes. Speaking on this very subject of a training college for men out of or nearly out of the doctor's hands, he says, "I am a little dubious as to whether the men would be content to remain long under institutional control"; and again, "I feel sure that the feeling of independence from control, impossible in any institution, is an essential factor in any scheme designed to appeal to the average man, and not to the exceptional returned man." I am entirely in accord with these views, and for the reasons given I could not, for the present at any rate, see my way to support the schemes which have been put forward.

PARTICULARS OF PARTIALLY DISABLED MEN PLACED IN EMPLOYMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT.

Whilst the foregoing observations indicate the disappointment which has been experienced at the small response which the men have made in regard to the question of industrial training, the actual number of men suffering from serious disabilities for whom the Department has found employment shows the brighter side of the picture. The success which has been achieved in this direction accounts perhaps largely for the limited success of the training schemes. The amount of pension granted to a man, based as it is upon medical evidence, is a fair index of the extent of his disability, and a return has accordingly been prepared showing the number of men drawing pensions of £1 5s. per week and upwards for whom the Department has succeeded in obtaining remunerative employment. It may be mentioned that the loss of the sight of one eye ordinarily carries a pension of £1 per week, so that the rates selected for the return indicate nothing less than grave disability. The figures are as follows:—

Amount of Weekly Pension.							Number of Men placed in Employment.
£	s.	d.					
1	15	0	...	...	...	...	80
1	10	0	...	...	...	...	146
1	5	0	...	...	...	...	47

A more detailed statement is given in Appendix VII.

I have dealt at some length with matters which the Department has to deal with in relation to the employment of invalided men, including the training of those unable to follow their old occupations, because these are problems which are now actually before us demanding present-day attention, and because in some quarters the work of the Department is not understood—indeed, it is sometimes misrepresented.