

Massage Benefits

These are the latest arrivals, dating from September 1942, and it is estimated that they will cost the Fund £20,000 a year. Almost all the private masseurs have made contracts with the Minister to supply treatment at fixed rates—3/6 in their rooms, 7/- elsewhere. Social security meets these charges only when treatment has been recommended by a doctor.

The Social Security Act also provides for the institution of dental services and domestic assistance in the home when provision can be made for furnishing such services. New Zealand has always had a shortage of dentists and New Zealand mothers have found it more difficult than those in most other countries to obtain domestic help.

Both these questions, particularly that of domestic assistance, are being discussed urgently in the Dominion, and there is no doubt that some provision will be made as soon as the necessary facilities are available. It should be noted in this connection that the Government from the beginning of last year instituted special medical and dental bursaries to provide assistance to students desiring to take up these professions. The long period of training required will mean that the effect of these bursaries will not be felt for some six or seven years but the ultimate result will be to bring dental services nearer.

The provision of domestic assistance is being keenly discussed in its relation to post-war employment of girls now in the Armed Services, and several Women's Organizations have taken an active part in such discussions.

Rehabilitation of Injured Workmen in Ontario

BY JOHN CAMPBELL

AT the present time in Canada there is a great deal of talk and discussion about "Rehabilitation". The word itself has assumed a variety of meanings. In its true meaning Rehabilitation may be defined as the restoration of earning power to the disabled. It is based upon our knowledge that most of the physically handicapped possess latent talents that may be developed and utilized after proper training and placement.

In Canada there is, as yet, no continuous co-ordinated effort to reclaim the nation's cripples. Each branch of the Services appears to be embarking on a programme for the physical rehabilitation of its own casualties, while facilities for vocational rehabilitation are an integral part of the general scheme for the re-establishment of the veterans of the present war. Immediate needs have

focussed the attention of National Selective Service upon the necessity of utilizing the services of the handicapped to help alleviate manpower shortage. At a recent Conference on Vocational Rehabilitation, called by the Special Services Division of this branch of Government, it was urged that "consideration be given to the development of both a comprehensive plan and actual facilities at the earliest possible moment in order that the needs of the handicapped may be more adequately met and that the interest and co-operation of employers may be stimulated and broadened." The success of any of these plans will depend largely upon the extent to which those responsible for their execution are willing to benefit from past experience. Much could be learned from the twenty-three years' experience of the United States in Vocational Rehabilitation. In Physical Rehabilitation the success of R. Watson-Jones, M.C.H., F.R.C.S., and others

in Great Britain has been outstanding. The achievements and mistakes of the Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment programmes after the last war must be carefully studied. With the wise application of all that is best in these several schemes Canada may yet give leadership in this field.

Experience in Ontario

At such a time many will be interested to know that for the past nineteen years the Workmen's Compensation Board of the Province of Ontario has been engaged in Rehabilitation work. These services have been expanded and developed and the programme now in operation has received very favourable comment from the highest authorities on the subject on this continent.

This development has been made possible by the nature of the Ontario Act. Based on the findings of Sir William Ralph Meredith, former Chief Justice of the Province, who had completed an exhaustive study of the existing laws in Europe and the United States of America, the Ontario Act was passed in 1914. The system of compensation is one of compulsory, collective liability. It is free from the delays and costs of court procedure. As a result, the administrators have been able to concentrate on the broad, social purposes of Compensation.

While there have been increases in coverage and benefits since its inception, the general principles of the Act have been maintained. Legislation in other Provinces is largely based on the Ontario Act. Its provisions have been widely praised and copied. Excepting that its benefits are not yet extended to the entire community of workers, it meets all the requirements of the ideal Act according to the International Labour Office standards.

In Ontario today a man who suffers an accident while covered by the Act receives all necessary medical, hospital and nursing care. If disabled for longer than six days, he is entitled to compensation (two thirds of average earnings) as long as medical reports indicate that he

is totally disabled. Where artificial appliances are necessary, these are supplied, together with repairs and replacements during the lifetime of the claimant. If there is residual permanent disability, an award is made, based on the clinical disability rating that applies in each particular case and on the claimant's earnings prior to the accident. Except in cases of minor disability, this award is in the form of a monthly pension which continues for life, regardless of future earnings. This is an attempt to give to the claimant some monetary compensation for his estimated loss of earning capacity.

It then becomes necessary that the injured workman uses his residual manpower in some occupation suited to his condition, thereby earning sufficient to supplement his award and gain, for himself and his family, social security.

The main purpose of Workmen's Compensation legislation is to remove the hardships suffered by industrial workers as a result of accident. It is therefore obvious that, if, after receiving all the benefits to which he is entitled, the worker is unable to find employment, the Act has not achieved its purpose.

Knowing this and encouraged by the effort expended on the re-establishment of the handicapped men returning from the last War, the Ontario Legislature, in 1921, appointed a Select Committee to study the question of industrial rehabilitation. The Report issued by this Committee is one of the most important documents on Rehabilitation in the Dominion.

Their findings are largely summarized in the following quotation:

Dealing with the question of rehabilitation in quite a general way, it is suggested that any scheme that would embrace all cripples should be the matter of very careful consideration. Wholesale undertakings might perhaps paralyze results, as general work is largely experimental and rehabilitation as a whole, in the event of failure or even mediocre success, would eventually suffer. It is felt that a course of wisdom is to create a nucleus around which a more elaborate plan might grow. There is a strong chance for success

in rehabilitating cripples under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Workmen's Compensation Board already performs three, sometimes four, of the essential steps in scientific rehabilitation, namely—medical and surgical aid, functional re-education as far as such is contained in medical aid, prosthesis and compensation for permanent disability. Under its jurisdiction come numbers of employers, mutually bound up together. It can charge industry with the burden of industry's cripples. It possesses contact with both employers and injured workmen. The Workmen's Compensation Act, in itself, perhaps foreshadows authority for rehabilitation.

In keeping with this suggestion, in 1924, the Rehabilitation Section was added to the Workmen's Compensation Act. This section enables the Board to make expenditures to further Rehabilitation, provided that the total amount so expended will not exceed \$100,000.00 in any calendar year.

From 1924 until 1938, rehabilitation activities were carried out by the Statistical Department. During this period, the chief endeavour was to develop various methods of procedure and to encourage industry to re-employ disabled workers. Cases obviously in need of rehabilitation were referred to the vocational services, but no attempt was made to establish a complete programme reaching all seriously disabled workers.

It is the Board's desire that every worker injured while covered by the Act receive the very best possible medical attention. To further this desire a Physiotherapy Clinic was established in 1932. This has assisted greatly in improving functional restoration and shortening the period of convalescence. In 1938, Occupational Therapy was added. The Board's Clinic, combining these two phases of therapy treats an average of 180 patients every day. While these services were only secondarily vocational, they greatly facilitated the restoration of workers to industry by helping to bridge the gap between injury and return to employment.

Finally, in 1938, a rehabilitation department was established by the Board, consisting of the Rehabilitation Officer and

four Assistants. As personality means everything in work of this type, the staff has been selected with great care.

Each member of the staff has been allotted certain districts of the Province in which he has to carry out the Board's Rehabilitation Programme. He must, therefore, develop a thorough knowledge of the local industries. He must be familiar with details of manufacturing processes and new developments. He must cultivate a friendly relationship with management and labour. He must be familiar with regulations of National Selective Service and obtain their ready co-operation. He must be a man of broad sympathies and good judgment.

Rehabilitation Procedure

When an accident is reported to the Board and the original Surgeon's Report indicates that permanent disability will result, the case is immediately referred to the Rehabilitation Department. If the disability is such that it will be difficult or impossible for the man to return to his former work, Departmental records are made and the case is referred to the Rehabilitation Assistant in whose district the claimant resides.

The employer is contacted early while the accident is fresh in his mind—his sympathy strongest—to ascertain if the claimant, on recovery, can in some way be re-employed at his old work. If not, do they have other work he could do? Could he be trained in the plant or elsewhere for another position? If he could, the cost of training could be borne by the Department. The employer who thinks of this right after an accident usually has a constructive suggestion. If the man is forgotten until recovery is reached, placement is much more difficult. Sometimes the employer is anxious to help, but knows of no suitable work in his plant. From previous experience, the Rehabilitation Assistant can sometimes suggest openings and the employer is glad to learn of these.

The next step is to see the man. The provisions of the Act are explained. He is given assurance of the Board's desire to help and told the good news that

work awaits him on recovery or assured that the Board will do all possible to assist his placement. This early contact generally dispels from the claimant's mind the fear of want, incapacitation and industrial uselessness that frequently engenders neurosis—a condition that often disables more than the injury itself.

Periodic check-up as to progress is then made and at the right time active steps are taken to rehabilitate the man. The most successful form of rehabilitation is always in the return of the injured to their own industry, in some capacity, and the possibilities of accomplishing this are always exhausted before anything else is attempted. If change is necessary, the period of convalescence can sometimes be used to acquire knowledge needed for the new job.

Where training is given, it is only granted after a careful study of the claimant's background, work history and education. Business courses, for instance, are only granted when there is a definite opening after training or the claimant is comparatively young, has definite aptitude for this type of work and has had a good High School education. In other circumstances the removal from the hurried atmosphere of the shop to the comparative ease of the classroom tends to produce lazy habits, not easily corrected. Training is given at Technical School, Business College or Trade School, while Factory Training for a specific job has also been effective. Often the Dominion-Provincial War Emergency Classes have helped towards quick and satisfactory placement at a great saving in cost.

Employing the Handicapped

Where can these men be employed? At one time it was thought that lists of possible jobs would be helpful, but this does not work. So many men are doing jobs that are theoretically impossible with their disability. The tabulation of opportunities tends to limit them and to brand certain jobs as "handicapped jobs", resulting in a lowering of the standard or work offered to the disabled. Variable circumstances control the proper place-

ment of each person and study and experience reveal that possibilities in placement are much more diversified than is generally considered possible.

It is always important to match the man with the job. At the present time, when opportunities for employment are plentiful, it is easy for those interested in the handicapped to glory in the number rather than the quality of their placements. Poor placements will do great harm to the Rehabilitation movement. By discrediting the work, they will, in the future, increase the hardships of the entire crippled community whether the disability results from congenital cause, industrial or other accident, or war wounds.

During the years 1941 and 1942, 247,000 industrial accidents were reported to the Board. While several thousand resulted in permanent disability, only 681 were considered to be so badly handicapped that they could not possibly return to their old job. These constitute the main problem of the Department. In addition, the Department is responsible for the return to industry of the much larger number who, although unlikely to be permanently disabled, will have serious temporary disability for some time.

During this two-year period, 592 of the seriously permanently disabled cases were closed as "rehabilitated". Of these, only 56% were re-employed by their own firms, while 44% were placed elsewhere. Thus it can be seen that, although many employers gladly meet their responsibilities to their own disabled, many do not. This is a fact which industry and those entrusted with the rehabilitation of the disabled men who will be returning from the present conflict might well ponder.

During this period when 247,000 industrial accidents were reported to the Board, only 65 of the seriously handicapped cases were closed as "not rehabilitated". Among them were 21 totally disabled persons while in the remaining cases other reasons such as refusal to cooperate, or departure from the province, prevented rehabilitation.

Prejudice against the disabled exists largely because of inadequate information

regarding their capabilities or erroneous impressions as to their safety as workers. Many employers, even during this war-time emergency, have refused to hire physically handicapped workers, contending that they are more susceptible to injury or otherwise constitute a liability as far as compensation is concerned. Numerous studies of factual data on productivity, accidents, sickness and pension plans show that the hiring of handicapped workers presents no greater risk than does the hiring of the able-bodied. A recent survey of 125 industrial concerns made by the American Society of Safety Engineers, revealed the following:

66% of the employers said that the productive output of these workers was as high as that of the able-bodied; 24% stated that it was higher, because the handicapped had developed greater powers of concentration than most able-bodied workers.

55% of the employers said there was less absenteeism in the handicapped group and 83% stated that labour turnover among them was lower than among the able-bodied.

Experience in Ontario confirms these facts and amply demonstrates the worth of the handicapped man in industry. The annual earnings of the 592 vocationally handicapped claimants, who as a result of Rehabilitation assistance were returned to gainful employment, would total approximately \$717,000.00. If further proof is desired that from an economical standpoint it is financially sound to spend money on these men, it should be pointed out that the average cost of rehabilitation per case, including the cost of training, maintenance during training and administration, was only \$70.00. The cost, therefore, is trifling, but is it impossible to know what these cases might have cost industry and the nation, had they, through lack of assistance, become dependent upon the community. Industry has gained many useful employees and a tragic waste of

human resources has been avoided. Men who might otherwise have been regarded as a liability have become a great national asset. A few of the successful cases of rehabilitation handled by the Department might be of interest:

A young steel rigger loses his left arm below the elbow. His firm would like to re-employ him, but does not know of any openings. On the Department's suggestion, and with its personal assistance he learns the job of stock-keeper. As he becomes more proficient in the use of his artificial arm, he qualifies as First Aid Attendant.

A steam shovel operator, with his right arm off above the elbow, had no desire but to return to his own trade, although his employers stated that a one-armed man could not possibly do the job. Arrangements were made to have an artificial limb constructed which had a special locking arrangement at the elbow. At the Board's Clinic, wooden levers were set up in exactly the same position as the levers in a shovel. After many days spent sitting there, manipulating these levers and getting used to the feel of them, the man returned to his old job and is carrying on with no loss of earnings.

A one-legged miner becomes an assayer; a truck driver with an injured spine becomes a welder; a silicotic becomes a machinist; a boy aged sixteen with the fingers of his left hand amputated is assisted to complete a course in draughting and is now employed at this work.

As a help in the present manpower crisis, the utilization of the services of the physically handicapped is of great importance to the nation, but it means much more in the sum of human happiness. It enables those disabled men and women to rid themselves of the feeling that they are a burden to others and converts them into wealth producers, rather than wealth consumers.