



## The Meaning of Rehabilitation

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## THE MEANING OF REHABILITATION

BY MAJOR JOHN L. TODD,

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The term "rehabilitation" is used in more than one sense. In a narrow sense it refers only to soldiers: sometimes it is used as though only disabled sailors and soldiers required rehabilitation. When it is used in that way the flood of sound, strong men who will return from fighting to their homes at the end of the war is forgotten.

Rehabilitation of soldiers necessarily includes the replacement in civilian life of the uninjured men who will return after the war from service, on shore and afloat, as fast as the ships of the world can carry them. But the term rehabilitation should be used in a broader sense; rehabilitation includes not only sailors and soldiers but the whole community. It is so, for our sailors and soldiers are citizens. Since they are citizens, their rehabilitation is a matter of such wide extent that it can leave no phase of social organization untouched.

In Great Britain, a Department of Reconstruction with wide connections and wide powers exists to study questions such as these. In Canada, the same thing is done by a committee of the Cabinet.

Rehabilitation in the narrowest sense, as it refers to the replacement of broken fighting men in their homes, is well understood. It is well understood on this continent because of the many very excellent articles upon "rehabilitation" which have appeared not only in scientific and semi-scientific publications but in the popular press. Rehabilitation in the broader sense has been less considered. Because it is so I will mention in a general way, first, some of the problems and tendencies of rehabilitation in the larger sense and then allude more particularly to some of the points connected with the rehabilitation of sailors and soldiers where experience in Canada has shown difficulties to be most likely to arise.

If, in speaking of rehabilitation, our minds are not fully conscious of that which is being done at every minute on the world-wide battle field we lack appreciation of our situation. Those who are fighting are deciding for us the form which the rehabilitation of

our country shall take. In fighting, and in planning rehabilitation, we are deciding not only for ourselves but for our children and for our children's children. Upon the decision arrived at, the future development of our race depends. The plan which rehabilitation will follow depends entirely upon the result of the war. The first step in rehabilitation is to win the war. Its form, if we are beaten or if the war ends indecisively, will be quite different from that which it will take if we win. If our victory is not complete, our future organization will be military, and our dominant aim, defence against the aggression of future wars. But since we shall win decisively we will treat of the form of rehabilitation which complete victory makes desirable.

During reorganization after the war it will be unbelievably easy to achieve social ideals which before the war seemed impracticable and impossible of attainment. It will be especially easy on this continent not only because ours are young peoples, still in a stage of development where social structure is not stable, but also because the war has aroused a great spirit of mutual helpfulness, a desire to sacrifice self, a self-devotion. These factors cannot but leave an enduring mark upon national life. May our plans be so modelled that a measure of good may come from this evil of war.

In order that rehabilitation may be successful, it is essential that there should be a clear understanding in the mind of every citizen, not only of that which the community ought to do for itself and for the returning soldier, but also of that which every returning man ought to do for himself. Such a general knowledge, secured by wide publicity, constitutes the most powerful means of securing right action. The urge to do that which we are taught to do, that which is expected of us, is the most powerful of all human impulses. It is the herd instinct: the desire to do that which is right is stronger than self-preservation,—men die at their posts because it is their duty to do so: it is stronger than the wish for parenthood,—monks and nuns remain childless because it is their duty to do so.

Let us learn this from the enemy; "Will conquers." That is the device always before the German wounded. Just as unquestioningly as they once believed in German might, every German now believes that a disabled man, if he wills it, can be self-supporting and that it is the duty of every returning man by his will and through the aid of his fellows to become a self-supporting unit, a man who pulls his weight in the boat and is not a passenger.

## WORLD POLITICS

It is only by wide instruction, by constant repetition of the truth, that such an atmosphere can be assured to us in this country. Much has been done towards doing so. More must be done; everyone must know what rehabilitation, in the widest sense, ought to accomplish. One of the stated aims of the Allies is the establishment of some form of leagued nations by which future wars may be prevented. Since the Allied Nations are democratic communities, ruled by the suffrages of their individual citizens, it is necessary that we citizens should have a wider knowledge of the world and of world questions than has heretofore been ours. We must come to realize that it is no longer possible for a wise nation to remain isolated and uninfluenced by the current of the world's events. In the modern world all peoples are interdependent—and there is a real community of interest among them. Rehabilitation will bring nearer the liberty of thought, the equality of nations, the brotherhood among men, which France long ago placed before mankind as an ideal. We must be prepared to welcome a federation of the world.

Our internal national life will scarcely go back to its old form. The war has brought a habit of effort and a habit of thrift to many. We shall win the war through effort. We shall win the war after the war in the same way. Faithful living in France, faithful living here, has become a national creed. It will not be forgotten lightly. A determination which consecrated every resource to public uses will persist, in a measure, during peace; it will insist upon a proper conduct of public affairs.

In Great Britain, it is certain that many businesses, formerly conducted by private initiative, will be carried on after the war under public direction. How far it will be nationally advantageous for such a movement to develop is uncertain. If a generalization must be attempted, it would seem reasonable to say that processes or businesses which have become standardized and stereotyped in their operation may well be brought under public control, while processes which are still developing ought to remain in private hands where initiative and individual effort will meet with the greatest reward and incentive.

Before the war, circumstance left many women to a world of children, church and cooking. During the war, women have been

successful in wider fields than these. Their service has convinced many, who once refused conviction, that women are fit comrades for men and have, with them, a right to self-government. No longer are there suffragettes in England, for women have the vote! Everywhere there has been a tendency, not only to recognize woman's right to a voice in government, but her right to support from the state in the national service which woman only can render. Laws granting maternity allowances and mothers' pensions have been passed in many countries.

#### SAME PRIVILEGES FOR CIVILIANS AS FOR SOLDIERS

Public sympathy is quick to relieve hardships which affect sailors and soldiers or their dependents. Consequently, many evils touching sailors and soldiers have been remedied while the same evils pass unnoticed as matters of ordinary circumstance when civilians are affected. When it is seen that these things can be dealt with for sailors or soldiers it will be insisted that they should also be dealt with when ordinary citizens are concerned. There are many things now done for a citizen while he is serving in navy or army which a model community should do for its members at all times.

Members of an ideal community should possess instructions permitting full advantage to be taken of their capacity for usefulness. Soldiers are taught while they are serving; if they are disabled, they are taught a vocation during their convalescence and after their discharge. It is well that it is so for the best minds of the coming generation are at the front: our universities are empty. For the future good of our communities it is necessary that the interrupted education of these young men should be continued and opportunity for development be given to them.

Canada maintains in Great Britain and in France a Khaki College. Its function is to bring instruction to men who are still serving.

The Canadian Invalided Soldiers' Commission provides general education and instruction in vocations for disabled men during their convalescence. Because it is in the public interest to do so, it is increasingly the tendency to give technical education, or, for the illiterate, general education, to men who require no training on account of disability but who are anxious to learn.

After the war, men who want to study will obtain instructions through Workers' Educative Associations, or through the opportunities offered by modern universities for the education of adults. The value of increased education to sound social development is shown, strikingly, by the important place in British public affairs taken by workmen who acquired their knowledge of public problems, of public organization and of individual responsibility in these matters through courses studied while they followed their trades.

Among the most popular of the courses given in the Canadian Khaki College are those which deal with citizenship, its duties and its privileges. Men who study these things while they fight will not lend themselves to the irresponsible ravings of a Bolshevik. Their influence and knowledge will substitute reasonable methods of removing social injustice for the anarchy and disorder of an ignorant people.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

Medical treatment will be given whenever discharged men require it because of disabilities incurred during their service; pension schemes, such as War Risk Insurance, will give the men and their dependents insurance services, which will protect them against risks of many sorts. The fact that former sailors, soldiers and their families, are protected against risks of death, accident and ill-health, will inevitably lead towards the extension of social, health and life insurance to all citizens. In England, National Health Insurance already exists: a Ministry of Public Health will be founded after the war, if not before.

Because sailors and soldiers cannot conceal the existence of venereal disease, as is done by civilians, knowledge of the prevalence of venereal disease amongst our people has become general. Knowledge of the success with which these social diseases can be combated in the army and navy by preventive or curative measures has spread. At last, the prudery and license which long prevented control of venereal diseases is being removed by knowledge. The passing of adequate health laws in England, in Canada and elsewhere, is reducing the loss caused by venereal diseases. At last, those responsible for public health are getting powers commensurate with the importance of these plagues, powers almost as great as they have in dealing with smallpox, a disease that slays its units where syphilis slays its thousands.

## REHABILITATION OF DISABLED MEN

And now let us turn to disabled men and their rehabilitation. Wide publicity by voice, by print and by moving-pictures, among other means, has made Americans know that disabled soldiers can be made independent civilians by proper treatment, by proper training, and by careful replacement in employment.

The treatment received by disabled men includes all the devices that art and science can suggest: no means of reducing a disability is left untried. One new thing is the method by which Italian surgeons make use of the muscles in the stump of an artificial limb. They separate a muscle, make at its end a loop or a knot in the tendon, to which a cord can be tied. When the muscle contracts the cord is pulled and, if it is attached to an artificial leg, the soldier actually moves his limb by muscles which once moved a real leg!

There have been many improvements in artificial limbs and prothetic appliances of all sorts. The number of men who will use appliances will be large. There is but one efficient way of supplying artificial appliances to disabled men. In order to obviate a thousand difficulties, a government should establish definite types of limbs and of other appliances, make these unquestionably the best, and supply only them to men who are entitled to appliances at government expense. The manufacture of artificial limbs will be an industry of some importance for a generation to come. It will be an industry, from its nature, peculiarly fitted for disabled men. The French expect to place disabled soldiers in charge of centers all over France where new appliances may be obtained as they are required, and where old ones may be sent for repairs. It is a plan which might well be adopted elsewhere.

The training of returned soldiers is of the greatest importance. "Manners maketh man." A man's habits are himself. A man is that which he has done and is accustomed to do. If our men are to be good citizens in civilian life, as they have been in military life, they must be trained in good habits. They must be accustomed to doing the thing right in civilian life before they are discharged. It is impossible for habituation to the necessities of civilian life to commence too soon after it becomes evident that a man is no longer fit to be a sailor or a soldier. It takes months, sometimes years, to train a good sailor or soldier; it will take months of teaching and

many more months of living to undo that training and create habits harmonizing with civilian life. By work, by conversation, by every power of suggestion, men's thoughts should be turned to civilian life as soon as it becomes certain that they are to be discharged from service. Training of that sort is as much a part of remedial treatment as is nursing or operation. If it is wanting men become habituated to life in hospitals: they become hospitalized, lose all wish for initiative, for work, and become especially prone to mental and nervous disorders.

From the beginning, disabled men must be accustomed to the idea of work, of self-support, and not only to the idea of work in general, but to work in some special occupation. It may be that men, by the nature of their injuries, are unable to return to their pre-war employment. Such men must be urged to accept training in occupations which their aptitude and disability make proper for them. Sometimes men are unwilling to accept training. Consequently, there has been discussion whether vocational training, as it is called, should be made compulsory. The discussion is beside the point because experience shows that if men are well taught and well advised, opportunities for training are not usually refused. If men constantly refuse training, the training is at fault.

In dealing with the men, every method of persuasion, every means of pressure, should be used. Pressure from a man's family, from those dependent upon him, is often successful in making a man accept training at first refused. Even the cupidity of returned men may be worked upon; it has been found useful to point out to thrifty French peasants that the government is offering them, for nothing, training for which many civilians are very glad to pay.

Disabled men who are unwilling to take training are urged to consider the future when work will not be as easily obtainable as it is now, when the sympathy of employers will not be as keen as it is at present, and when a crippled soldier out of work will be little more than a disabled and inefficient man who is asking for a job which he cannot fill.

#### SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT FOR THE DISABLED

Disabled men can often be made capable of competing on equal terms with those who are sound. For that reason those who are



crippled should be taught occupations where special knowledge or where the special nature of the work will permit a well-trained man, though disabled, to compete unhandicapped with those who have the full use of their bodies. While training will permit many disabled men to compete in any field with those who are sound, it will be necessary to reserve for them certain occupations which can be easily performed by disabled men. Normal persons should not be engaged in such occupations. An excellent example of an occupation which should be reserved for disabled men is that of masseur. A blind man can massage as well as can one who sees. There are many things which a sighted man can do; there are few occupations open to a blind man. Posts as watchmen, as caretakers, as janitors, should be reserved, especially by the staple industries, for disabled men who cannot be fitted for better employment. Men who could fill such positions well, and for whom it is especially difficult to find employment, are the men, past middle age, who are illiterate and who have been disabled. Such men have never been more than laborers and their disability has taken from them the strength which was their only marketable usefulness.

There is a danger inherent in the reservation of specific employment for disabled men. It makes a special class of cripples; employments reserved for them cannot fail to become characterized as subnormal occupations. The tendency will inevitably be for remuneration offered in those occupations to be reduced. The tendency will be all the greater because men crippled in war service will be pensioners and therefore economically able to exist upon subnormal salaries.

No less important than the training of disabled men, and intimately related with it, is the placement of returning men. In finding employment for discharged sailors and soldiers great care must be taken to put them in places which they can successfully fill in competition with sound men when the war is over and the struggle for employment becomes keen. For this reason alone it is necessary for practical men who will not "put square pegs in round holes" to be in charge of returned soldiers' employment bureaus. France especially urges returned men to enter productive occupations; they are advised not to become scratchers of paper. Several nations maintain employment bureaus for returned men; there, side by side, on the same list are the names of officers and of men, of illiterates and of university graduates.

Treatment, training and placement are always mentioned in describing the rehabilitation of disabled men: there is a fourth factor and an important one. Returned men will doubtless form a new Grand Army of the Republic here, as they are doing elsewhere, for the purpose of watching over their own interests. It is not sufficient. The responsibility for making good to sailors, soldiers and their dependents the detriments which war has placed upon them, lies with the whole nation. Therefore it must be the responsibility of a governmental department to "follow up" and make certain that all continues well with the wards of the people. Returned men should be followed up to make certain that they have proper employment; orphans and widows should be followed up to see that they have faithful guardians and that their business interests are well managed. To do these things properly an organization which includes tactful and willing-handed people, trained in social service, as well as practical business men will be necessary. In order that the pensions awarded for varying injuries may accurately compensate for the disabilities resulting from them, it is necessary to carefully record that which actually happens to men suffering from the disabilities in question when they are thrown into civilian life. That is but one of the reasons which make it essential to carefully "follow up" the after-life of discharged men.

Rehabilitation touches national activities at many points. Because of its magnitude Great Britain, wisely, centers in a Ministry the administration of all things planned for discharged soldiers and for those belonging to them; similarly, in Canada, there is a Minister of Soldiers' Civil Reestablishment. In reviewing that which the United States has planned and is doing for the rehabilitation of her sailors and soldiers, deep admiration must be felt, both for the wisdom and comprehensive scope of her plans, and for the energy with which those plans are being acted upon.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Quite beyond a friendly pleasure that all is well, Canada has a very real personal interest in that which is done in the United States. It is this: the form taken by the organization of the United States for dealing with rehabilitation will greatly influence the form which Canada's organization for that purpose will assume. The United States has one hundred million people; Canada has but

eight. There is much passage of ideas and of many other things between these two countries. It is inevitable that the convictions of the population of the United States should become part of the belief of Canada.

The United States is the largest by far of the English-speaking nations. That is worth repeating; there are more people who speak English in the United States than there are in the whole British Empire. Moreover, the people are well-educated; the proportion of illiterates is small. What is done in the United States has great influence in the world. For these reasons, reverent thankfulness is felt that the entrance of the United States into the war, and its conduct of the war proves that its ideals are at one with those of Canada.

Since 1776 a separate nation, the United States is now the most coherent of the peoples who live in the Grecian tradition of self-government. Adherence to that tradition was sealed by 1776. A century later, steadfastness in it proclaimed that "government by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this earth." But a few days ago, the same determination spoke again in Pershing's terse, "Lafayette, we're here."