

VI.—DEPARTMENT OF SOLDIERS' CIVIL RE-ESTABLISHMENT.

Under Order in Council of June 30, 1915, the "Hospital Commission" was created to provide for the treatment of returning wounded and disabled soldiers, and in October of that year a revised Order in Council changed its name to "Military Hospitals Commission," and empowered it to carry on vocational training, and to deal with the subject of employment.

Two Orders in Council were passed on February 21, 1918, one creating the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment, and the other charging the Department of Militia and Defence with all active treatment cases except those suffering from tuberculosis, insanity and other diseases likely to be of long duration. This arrangement was confirmed by the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment Act, 1918 (8-9 Geo. V, c. 42).¹

The earlier activities of the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment have been described in the Year Book of 1920, pp. 21-29, to which the reader is referred for a general idea of the work of the Department in providing medical treatment, vocational training, retraining of the blind, provision of artificial limbs and appliances, and post-discharge dental treatment. These activities naturally reached their maximum in the period following the armistice, the number of employees of the Department being 9,035 in March, 1920. The total personnel employed on Dec. 31, 1921 was 4,886; this number was reduced by 1,063 to a total of 3,823 on Dec. 31, 1922.

At the close of the calendar year 1922, the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment was directly operating 15 hospitals and sanatoria with a total bed capacity of 3,857. In-patients on December 31, 1922, numbered 3,684 and out-patients 258. In all of these hospitals dietitians who make monthly reports on food costs have been placed; an elaborate system of cost accounting is maintained.

Two psychopathic hospitals are now being operated by the Department, one at Westminster, near London, and the other at Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Que. Here all classes of nervous and mental diseases are treated, and the most up to date methods, including continuous baths and other hydrotherapeutic installations, are in use. There is also equipment for occupational therapy, including both indoor and outdoor work of a constructive nature, as well as ward classes for bed patients and for those who are otherwise confined to the wards. To this work is detailed a special medical officer whose duty is to survey all patients and to make individual studies from the viewpoint of their physical and mental equipment, also of their occupational capacity and adaptability. The Department also has patients in a large number of provincial hospitals for the insane, and keeps close supervision, through the Neuropsychiatric Branch of the Medical Service, over the treatment of these patients and the conditions under which they are living. On December 31, 1922, the number of neuropsychiatric patients on strength was: mental, 1,103; nervous, 563; total, 1,666.

A brief summary of recent legislation concerning the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment is appended, together with the more important findings of the Royal Commission which sat in Ottawa during the latter part of the year 1922 to investigate certain charges brought against the Board of Pension Commissioners.

¹ Since the D. of S.C.R. Act is a skeleton only and provides for regulations to be promulgated by the Governor-General in Council on the recommendation of the Minister, the various Orders in Council passed under this authority practically constitute the laws as applied to the care and treatment of former members of the C.E.F.