

to seek new ones. The official announcement says:

"It is expected that the department of labor will play a very large part in the placing in employment of the uninjured soldiers and sailors, a task which the department will discharge directly and in which it will ask and use the cooperation of organizations and of individual employers and employes as well."

We observe that the plans have at least reached the point where "it is expected" something will be done. But we think that more than mere expectation ought to be in store for the men who, even now, are arriving on our shores by the thousands. We might consider also whether the facilities of the department of labor are indeed adequate for this great task.

In examining these various phases of the plans for taking care of our fighting forces after demobilization we inevitably come to the conclusion that only blind optimism or worse could induce the administration to assure us blandly that no reorganization is required and that everything necessary is being done.

RECONSTRUCTION AND THE RETURNING SOLDIER.

We are assured, almost petulantly, by administration spokesmen that the present governmental departments possess both the ability and the organization adequately to deal with the different phases of reconstruction. It is worth while, therefore, to examine concretely and specifically the provision, or lack of it, that is being made for the returning sailor and soldier. To take care of these men, to see that they are returned to useful positions in civil life, is beyond question a primary duty of the government. The fulfillment of that obligation may be regarded as a measure of the government's success in reconstruction.

Now this work is to be performed, under the present plan, by three separate and distinct agencies--the war risk insurance bureau, the federal board for vocational training, and the department of labor.

Inasmuch as the disabled soldier will furnish the greatest problem we may consider his case first. He is advised to apply to the vocational training board, whose machinery, it is only fair to say, seems adequate to give these men the reeducation they need. It will be adequate, at least, if the purposes of the legislation under which the board was created are carried out. But at the outset the disabled soldier will discover a difficulty; he must interview the war risk insurance bureau. The necessity for this lies in the fact that the allowance granted him during the period of reeducation or vocational training is governed by the amount he receives from his insurance. This may not seem a great difficulty, but any one who has had any experience with government red tape will realize how irksome the process may be.

After he has received his training the disabled soldier or sailor will naturally want a job. What provision is made for giving him employment? Here is the answer as it is given in one of the latest bulletins of the federal board: "In assisting the disabled man to secure desirable employment the federal board, as authorized and directed by the vocational rehabilitation act, will utilize as far as may be practicable the facilities of the department of labor."

In other words, a new agency which has not previously handled these cases takes them over and becomes largely responsible for their welfare. We realize, of course, that the federal board is supposed to exercise continuing supervision, and that there is presumed to be a large degree of cooperation between the various agencies.

But we think it is plain there is bound to be diffusion and duplication of effort, if not outright friction, when several agencies, each having an equal degree of authority, seek to accomplish a given piece of work.

We have, thus far, spoken only of the injured men, of whom it is estimated there will not be more than 100,000. What of the millions of other men who come home without injuries? Many of them, of course, will go back to their old jobs, but there will be thousands and thousands of others who, for one reason or another, will have