NATION HAS DUTY

TO SOLDIERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS.

When this country called some millions of its young men, and, for that matter, some almost of middle life, to give up business, to give up home and to give up all prospects of the future and offer their lives on the battlefield to save the rest of us from being overrun by German barbarism, no man who was called to the colors stopped to consider his future when the war was over. Nevertheless, the country placed itself under a moral obligation to these men and their families to see that they should not suffer financially by reason of their sacrifice.

We owe it now to the men who were called to this great work to see that they have every consideration which the nation can offer in overcoming the loss of business or the loss of health. And the families of those who died in camp or on the battlefield should not be permitted to suffer by reason of the loss of their support. The nation is too rich to be niggardly. Our accumulation of wealth should prove a curse to us if we do not deal with the utmost liberality with the men who were called into the army, and with the families of those who died or were permanently invalided.

The government is proposing to train the maimed to be self-supporting. It is taking the men who have been blinded and educating them to docertain manual labor. But among these blinded and maimed men were many who had never done manual labor. They were men of education and of business affairs. To put them down to the dull drudgery of making baskets or kindred work as a means of support would be a serious reflection upon the honor of the American people. The government should give them every opportunity for education and for training for some work which would keep them from idleness, not so much for the money which they would make out of it, but for a certain degree of independence which comes with employment. But no man not accustomed to that kind of work should be made dependent upon it through the failure of the government to abundantly care for him.

THE REAL REASON

WHY HE WANTS A DISCHARGE.

The families that were dependent upon these permanently invalided or maimed men or upon those who died in camp or on the battlefield should likewise be made independent by an income for life which would at least enable them to live in comfort. A pension of $20 to $30 a month to a mother or a wife of a soldier who died for his country and upon whom she was dependent is picayunish and beneath the honor of the people of this country.

The insurance plan devised by the Treasury Department was a wise move, but it should not be regarded as in any respect whatever the full duty of the Government. The maximum insurance of $10,000 on a soldier's life will give to the beneficiary in the way in which the Government pays it about $57 a month for twenty years. That helps, but it is a very small sum compared with the value of that man's life even from the financial standpoint to those dependent upon him. In a well-ordered family, when one member becomes permanently invalided the other members regard it as their privilege and duty to make the sick one comfortable through life. The American people should regard themselves as a part of one great family, and every invalid soldier should be treated in the same way.

The nation is very wisely planning the building of highways and the drainage of land and seeking to turn thousands of soldiers to farm life. None of this work should be done or even for a moment considered from the standpoint of being done by the soldiers as soldiers. If any of the army men want to take up the outdoor life of road building and reclamation work, they should be given the opportunity of doing so, but to consider the employment of them as soldiers in work of this kind—a suggestion that has been made—would be absurd.

With probably more than one-third of the world's accumulated wealth, with our wealth increasing at a rate that we can scarcely comprehend, with resources for continued development beyond anything known elsewhere, we can afford to assume burdens in the maintenance of the maimed soldiers and of the families of those who died, and we can afford to co-operate with the soldiers in getting them started in life again on a scale which no other nation in the world could consider. These men have given from one to two years of the very best of their lives to saving us. They have given up business, they have lost opportunities which would have come to them, while the rest of the people stayed at home and made money by filling the very places of the men called to the war.