

# Veterans Bureau Tangle Problem for President

## Plans for Re-Establishing Agency on Firm Base to Confront Harding When Vacation Is Over.

(Continued From Page One.)  
flected his confident satisfaction that the war veterans' bureau was being managed with exceptional efficiency. If the coming investigation shows that all this was not true and that the war veterans' bureau, instead of being one of the triumphs of Harding's administration, is one of its failures, the blow will be as great to Harding's public prestige as to his own confidence in his selection of men. As has been said, his selections for the management of this bureau were personal in an especial sense.

**Dr. Sawyer Chief's Aid.**  
Some of Harding's personal appointments have caused a good deal of dismay. Some others of them have turned out to be among the best he has made. For example, it is a fact that the man who appears to have been most diligent in finding out that all was not well with the war veterans' bureau, a most active in tracing it on Harding's attention and bringing about a change was another of Harding's personal appointments, namely, Dr. Sawyer. In this and in other respects Dr. Sawyer has acquired an exceptional reputation for ability and for the kind of devoted loyalty to the president which is accompanied by sound common sense and vigilance in behalf of the president's fortunes.

Also, when criticism is made of the less happy of Harding's personal appointments it is necessary to remember that the number of them in proportion to all his appointments has been small and that such disasters as have accompanied some of his personal appointments should be balanced against the extraordinary quality of those appointments as to which Harding went completely away from his personal circle and chose men for their ability and standing solely. Harding chose Hughes to be secretary of state without having any personal relation to him and also against the determined opposition of many of the republican leaders. As Hoover, Harding had to more or less force him down the throats of some of the senate. Mellon, when Harding appointed him secretary of the treasury, was wholly unknown to Harding personally. The appointment was made as the fruit of a search for the best possible man. And today there is not a man in Washington, not even a democrat, who fails to take pleasure in proclaiming that Mellon is a very great secretary of the treasury. Another appointment as to which Harding went completely outside the circle of his personal acquaintance was that of Denby as secretary of the navy. Denby was not known to Harding personally and Harding chose him largely because John Weeks recommended Denby on account of the fact that during the war Denby, although a mature man and an ex-congressman, had joined the marine corps and in this simple capacity had done a notable work in the line of building up morale among the enlisted men. Another appointment as to which Harding went outside his own personal or political circle was that of Henry Wallace as secretary of agriculture.

**Vets' Grievances Real.**  
One of the unhappy results of the dissatisfaction with the management of the war veterans' bureau and of the feeling of the administration that it is on the defensive in this respect is that there is unwillingness on the part of many men associated with this work to say publicly certain things which they say privately with great force. Because of the defects in the management of the government's relations to the veterans the veterans have real grievances. In the confessed presence of these grievances it is not possible for men in the administration to say some things which they actually feel. If you talk for half an hour with any of the officials whose duties bring them into contact with the vocational training for hospital facilities and the like, you discover a deep conviction on their part that in addition to the things which are done badly and which cause many of the veterans a real and crying grievance there are also some respects in which harm is being done to some of the veterans by too easy-going a policy on the part of the government.

For example, the following story is told as it came to the writer, without knowledge of such qualifications might be developed by more intimate acquaintance with the facts of this particular case: A certain rich man has a son in one of the large universities. The father, having made his money, wishes to be careful not to deprive his son of the value of his own experiences of thrift and care in the management of money. In that spirit this wealthy father gives his son a certain sum per month, and requires the boy to keep his expenditures within that limit. On an occasion when the father learned of his son's son as to whether his monthly stipend was enough, he was amused to discover that the son's complaint lay in the fact that two of his fellow-students had more money than he to spend. The two fellow-students were ex-soldiers who were being educated by the government as a part of the system of vocational education, and who were actually being paid by the government for their personal expenses considerably more money than the son of the rich father. Among other things, the rich father's son had to shave himself, black his hair, buy shoes, but the ex-soldiers were able to patronize the college barber. Of course, there may be circumstances about this case which make it exceptional and not typical.

**Another Case Cited.**  
As illustrating another phase of the same situation, a government official inspecting a hospital for ex-soldiers asked the doctor in charge how soon he would be able to cure some of his soldier patients so that they could get back to work in private life. The doctor replied that he would never be able to cure them to the point where they would be willing to leave the hospital voluntarily, because the amount of money the government was paying them as ex-soldiers under treatment was just enough to make them timid about going out of the

hospital and trying to make a beginning in some private occupation. In the judgment of some of the government officials, this sort of thing is a great disadvantage to the ex-soldiers. It is leading the young men in a direction away from self-reliance. As one official expressed it: "The government, by its management, is wilfully building up among tens of thousands of young men a most unhappy spirit, hurtful to themselves and likely to cause them to have a most un-American attitude toward our government."

If the coming investigation could be managed in such a temper as to cover the whole matter of policy about the government's relation to the veterans the result might be permanently useful in a constructive sense. The amount of money now being paid out is by far the largest single item of government expense, except the item of interest on the war debt. The expense for care of the veterans is already much greater than was anticipated, and those who are closest to the subject of appropriations say that it will go on increasing from year to year, and fear that it is almost impossible to see the end. Apart from the money involved, there is doubt as to the efficacy of some of the training provided, and doubt as to the adaptation of many of the individual ex-soldiers to the careers for which the government is training them. There is fear, also, that there is being built up in the minds of these soldiers a spirit of dependence on the government which will have the unhelpful effects on their ability to make good in the world and on their attitude toward society.

**Hines' Appointment Commended.**  
Whatever may have been the defects in the recent management of the war veterans' bureau, there is universal expectation among those most competent to judge that the management now in charge will do well. Harding's appointment of Brigadier General Hines to take charge was the fruit of a search for a man best qualified by training and ability for this kind of task. Men who have had contact with General Hines in his conduct of the various official functions he has filled in the past go out of their way to commend him and express enthusiastic confidence in his ability to handle this extraordinarily difficult job. Competent officials of the government say it would be possible to save as much as \$100,000,000 a year in the management of the veterans' bureau and at the same time do all that is now being done for the ex-soldiers and do it more to the status compensated, so far as it is humanly

What is needed is that every ex-soldier who has been disabled should be cured for in such a way as to make him feel that his sacrifice has been compensated, so far as it is humanly possible to do it. And the important thing is that this service should be given to the ex-soldier in such a way and at such a time as to give him satisfaction. What the ex-soldiers complain against, and complain against with a justice that appeals to everybody, is that there is intolerable delay in taking up their cases, and lack of the best management for the hospitals and vocational training schools in which the ex-soldiers are cared for. Both as to giving hospital care to the disabled and as to providing them with training to make a livelihood, time is important. In actual practice, delay

is the great complaint. The ex-soldiers express no grievance against the provision congress has made for them, nor do they complain of the amount of money assigned to each. All the burden of dissatisfaction is charged against management, against lack of prompt efficiency in administration.

**Eyes Set on World Court.**  
Another aspect of President Harding's course when he returns that is going to be watched with much interest is the question whether he will make a fight in favor of his proposal to join the permanent court for international justice or will let it take its own way to whatever may be its fate without aid from him. The general judgment is that Harding in public psychology say it is impossible for a president to make the right kind of an impression on the public if he looks upon his office merely as that of one who recommends. They say that if Harding does not believe fervently in the court, he ought not to have proposed it, and that having proposed it, and identified himself with it, he should now accept the challenge of those who have set up opposition to it.



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