

HOUSE No. 85.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

BOSTON, Jan. 7, 1882.

To his Excellency JOHN D. LONG, Governor.

Herewith please find the report of the Superintendent of Disabled Soldiers' Employment Bureau, which I respectfully forward, with the hope that the Commonwealth may continue its help, if in your opinion the money is well bestowed.

RECEIVED 1881.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Balance on hand Dec. 1, 1880 | \$747 16 |
| Cash from State | 3,000 00 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$3,747 16 |

EXPENDED 1881.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Salary of Superintendent | \$1,500 00 |
| Transportation and charity | 1,471 85 |
| Messenger Corps | 207 30 |
| Office expenses | 168 35 |
| Balance on hand Dec. 1, 1881 | 399 66 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$3,747 16 |

Your very obedient servant,

HENRY S. RUSSELL,

Treasurer.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-two.

MASSACHUSETTS EMPLOYMENT BUREAU FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS,
34 PEMBERTON SQUARE, BOSTON, Dec. 1, 1881.

GENERAL H. S. RUSSELL, *Treasurer*, —

SIR, — I have the honor to submit the following report of the transactions of this Bureau for the past year to date: —

Number of new applicants registered, seven hundred and thirty-two (732). Of this number thirty-nine (39) have lost, or lost the use of, a limb each; two hundred and eighty-three (283) have been otherwise wounded, more or less severely, and four hundred and ten (410) were discharged for or incurred disabilities in the service.

Number furnished with employment or transportation to their homes, or to friends able to help them, eight hundred and forty-five (845). Of these thirty-four (34) have lost, or lost the use of, a limb each; three hundred and thirty-four (334) have been otherwise more or less severely wounded, and four hundred and seventy-seven (477) incurred other disabilities in the service.

For the information of those interested, who do not fully understand its "work," it may be well to explain. This Bureau was established in January, 1865, by order of Gov. John A. Andrew, its purpose being to aid honorably discharged men, disabled while serving in the army or navy to the credit of this Commonwealth during the war of the rebellion, especially in obtaining employment, but in any and every way possible to again become self-supporting citizens.

Sixteen years of success in obtaining work for nearly as many thousands of more or less crippled Massachusetts soldiers and sailors, at small annual expense to the State, has proved the wisdom of the order. But for the assistance received from this Bureau, many of these very men, who to-day are supporting their families comfortably, would long ago have become in part or whole a public charge.

In September of the same year the "Soldiers' Messenger Corps" was organized — from among the one-armed applicants — and placed in charge of the Superintendent of the Bureau. Starting with ten men, the corps was gradually enlarged, until it contained twenty-four (24) members, its present number. These messengers (*Red-Caps*) have permanent stations assigned them throughout the business portion of the city; their duties, the carrying of letters and parcels, distributing cards and circulars, collecting and paying bills, etc., for regular patrons, and all who choose to employ them. Their charges are regulated by a tariff of rates established for the various localities, distance from stations, etc.

The corps has been a success from the beginning; its members being perfectly familiar with all portions of the city and suburbs, prompt in responding to all calls for service, honest and reliable under any and all circumstances, have gained the confidence of their patrons and the public generally; and, except in cases of long-continued sickness, earn enough to support themselves and families comfortably. For the benefit of discipline, and to insure constant attendance to duties, each messenger is required to report to the Superintendent every morning, and also to report the amount of his previous day's receipts; but every man retains his individual earnings; and, besides being assisted in times of need, their uniform caps, order boxes, etc., are furnished them from the funds of the Bureau. In addition to the twenty-four regular members of the corps, there are from ten to twenty extra messengers; some of them always within call in case of sudden demand for the distribution of large quantities of advertising matter, etc., and during the holidays.

The number of new names added to the registry of applicants from day to day affords but a faint idea of the actual number of those who seek the aid of this Bureau, for there is

absolutely nothing pertaining to ex-soldiers' and sailors' interests, past, present, or future, that they do not seek here. Men — hundreds of them — whose applications extend back over all the years since the war closed, continue to come to the Bureau for new places as soon as able to work again after having lost a situation in consequence of sickness, re-opening of wounds, or some cause resulting from injuries received during service. On the other hand, probably an equal number, once placed, have not needed further aid. But, as years pass, it is more and more difficult for the ex-soldier or sailor, brought, as he necessarily is, into direct competition with younger and perfectly able-bodied men, to find, and secure when found, situations that, in his more or less disabled condition, he can fill: right here the work of this Bureau comes in. The Superintendent, having known the applicant for years perhaps, goes with, or gives him a letter to, the employer, vouching for his ability, correct habits, etc.; and the place is secured, the soldier and his family provided for; whereas in nine-tenths of these cases the soldier, without just such aid as he receives from this Bureau, would fail to get it.

In consequence of the character of its work this Bureau is being continually informed of cases of need — often urgent in the extreme — among the disabled soldiers and families of those killed, or who have since died from the effects of wounds or other injuries received in the service. As a rule, all such cases are promptly investigated, and, when found really deserving, immediate distress is relieved and a report of it made to some one both able and willing to assist it. Requests from charitable persons for information concerning individuals who have applied to them for aid, claiming to have been soldiers, or in some way connected with them, have gradually increased with passing years, until the investigation of them has become no small part of the work of the Superintendent after office hours; but by this means many really deserving, needy families are reached, and some of them substantially helped, that would otherwise suffer or be forced to apply for public charity.

From the organization of the Bureau to the present, it has had a class of applicants physically disabled for continuous labor, however light (by wounds, or some one or more of the

disabilities incident to the service), but in receipt of government pensions, varying from two to six or eight dollars per month, and usually of state aid to about an equal amount—not quite enough to support the man alone, and when he has, and he usually does have, a family to support, how to live becomes a serious question. But the poor fellows *can* work a part of the time, and it fortunately happens that the Bureau can furnish about the only kind of work they can do to advantage, viz., distributing all kinds of advertising matter, hand-bills, circulars, wedding invitations, business cards, etc. Scarcely a day passes that we do not have more or less of this kind of work for them, and frequently have twenty or thirty at work, for days in succession, distributing matter for some large advertising house. We are constantly securing new customers for this kind of light work, not only in this city and vicinity, but from New York, Philadelphia, and other large cities. These jobs give the men work from a day or two to a week or two at a time, and they usually make good wages. These earnings, when added to pensions and state aid, enable them to support and remain with their families. The great majority of those who were good soldiers prefer to work all they are able to, and, if necessary, to live on one meal a day in their own homes rather than be separated from their families by becoming inmates of the National Homes, with plenty to eat and little or no work.

I am, General,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. O. BALCOM,

Supt. Soldiers' Bureau and S. M. Corps.

RECAPITULATION.

| | Loss of Limb. | Otherwise Wounded. | Diseased. | Total. |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------|
| Number of new applicants registered from Dec. 1, 1880, to Dec. 1, 1881 | 39 | 283 | 410 | 732 |
| Number furnished with employment from Dec. 1, 1880, to Dec. 1, 1881 | 34 | 334 | 477 | 845 |

The total number of applicants aided to employment through this Bureau to date is fourteen thousand six hundred and fifty-four (14,654).

