

*Supply—Veterans Affairs*

**Mr. Gregg:** I do not see how it could be done because the basis of eligibility for the Canadian Volunteer Service medal was volunteering for service in His Majesty's forces.

**Mr. Lennard:** That brings up a matter which perhaps I should not bring up, that these promises were made. We will let it go at that, but I think it should be on the record again that they were promised these benefits by a certain representative of the government. That is an established fact.

Item agreed to.

530. Veterans welfare services, \$3,494,538.

**Mr. Harkness:** I understand that steps have been taken by the department to secure employment for older veterans. Could the minister tell us what is being done along that line at the present time and what success has been achieved?

**Mr. Gregg:** Quite apart from our work in that connection, there is an attempt to co-operate with the national employment service in helping to find work for older veterans. These are mainly veterans of world war I whose average age is now 61 years. There is the utmost desire on the part of these older veterans to continue just as long as they possibly can. Unfortunately there are a number of veterans, not many—about one per cent—who have never become re-established during the thirty years after the war and yet have been able to keep their faith, their hope and their cheerful outlook on life.

The way we have gone about it is the establishment within this division of a small group, having smaller counterparts in the districts, which has been carrying on a good deal of discussion with employers in connection with this matter. I had the privilege myself of talking on this subject to the Canadian Manufacturers Association the other day in Toronto, and also at a number of other places. Valuable work is going on from day to day in seeking employment and breaking down the resistance of employers to putting these older men to work. They can give just as valuable service today as they could have given 20 or 25 years ago. I think that fact is becoming realized more and more.

During the three years that we have been concentrating on this matter the national employment service, with the help of ourselves and other agencies, have turned up 160,000 jobs into which these older veterans have been fitted. I hasten to state that those are not 160,000 permanent jobs as some of them would represent one, two or three jobs for the same man. We feel that this work is valuable, primarily for the good effect upon the veteran and, secondarily, for the saving it represents

[Mr. Hellyer.]

to the country. If many of these men did not obtain employment in this way they would become applicants for war veterans allowances.

In connection with the older veterans I should like to say a special word about the corps of commissionaires, and also to pay tribute to the public spirited men across Canada who are giving their time and effort free as members of the board of governors to make the corps the success it is. There are something like 5,000 older veterans registered in the corps. I saw 300 of them on parade the other day. At the right of the line were the old chaps of the South African war with their medals up, and the average age of the remainder would be at least sixty-one. The corps provides a place of service for men who have maintained their integrity, discipline and trustworthiness but who have no special skill and perhaps are not too strong physically. In the main their posts of supervision do not require manual work. It is valuable for its effect upon the men. It is useful for the employer because he does not have to worry about what employing older men will do to his pension or group insurance scheme. The corps takes care of all the normal security measures that would otherwise fall upon the employer. I thank my hon. friend for the opportunity of saying a word about older men entering into employment.

**Mr. Harkness:** As I understand it, the department maintains no placement officer in order to put older veterans in jobs. Is that not the situation?

**Mr. Gregg:** We do not turn down any opportunity to place them directly but normally we work through the excellent facilities provided by my colleague, the Minister of Labour. He has a special veterans officer who is the liaison man between the employment service and our own local offices. Consequently better results are obtained in that way than if we attempted to build up any kind of separate organization of our own.

**Mr. Harkness:** I was wondering what special efforts are made by the placement people in the Department of Labour in order to get the older men into jobs. I have hired a few men myself during the last two or three years. I have never seen any indication that any effort was made to place veterans rather than others. As a matter of fact there are certain indications at times that perhaps the reverse is the fact. What I am really trying to get at is what particular, definite and specific steps are taken to try to get these people into employment? It seems to me that efforts along that line are not as definite as they might be, that considerably more