

men working in the hospitals, but they are administering what we call clinical treatments to hundreds at Christie street hospital. I have seen that myself. I wanted to satisfy myself that such was the condition. Last year we administered more than 160,000 different clinical treatments. When a soldier comes into a hospital or the unit—it is the same place now in Toronto because we have contracted the service and everything is now under one roof—seeking treatment, it is impossible to say to that man: You are looking for treatment; you cannot have it; you have to go out; you will not be attended to. That man must be admitted and you must have a physician examine him. His case may require services of a specialist or, perhaps, two or three specialists. This is now about seven years after the war. A disability that has been recurrent after two, three, four, five or six years may be very much complicated, and it may require an X-ray man to take radiographs of this man's body. It may require a surgeon to ascertain that an operation is not needed. Heaven knows that we make mistakes, especially in the medical profession. It is too well known that in many cases the diagnosis is not made as it might be; but, as the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Ross) knows that is the weak side of our profession, and unhappily amongst our medical men there are some who make mistakes like the rest of us. You have to examine this man; you have to decide whether he requires treatment or not, and you have to admit him to hospital or to refuse him. All that requires services, and nobody will give you those services for nothing, especially if it is the government that requires the services. It is my expectation that the number of employees will be further reduced in the course of the present year by a few hundred and probably next year also, although the number of patients is about the same as it was twelve months ago. When we are on this item "care of patients", I might explain that last year we had in our hospitals, I think 3,730 patients, and the last figure I have of patients under treatment is 3,704, or only a few less than last year. It is sometimes claimed that the department is too severe, that our medical men are refusing treatment to people who are entitled to treatment. I do not know whether this accusation is well founded or not, but at all events I have never heard that the medical men in the employ of the department have allowed into the hospitals patients who should not be allowed. I do not know of any man who is being treated to-day who does not deserve treatment. It may be that some may claim that a few soldiers are not being treated

[Mr. Bélard.]

who are entitled to treatment. In the last instance we have to abide by medical opinion, because this is largely a matter of medical appreciation. I am sorry that I have detained the committee so long, but I thought it was only fair that I should give hon. members this explanation.

Mr. CLARK: I asked the minister during his remarks to state the cost of the administration of pensions. He said that he would give me the figures, but he has not done so. I would like to draw the attention of the committee to one point in connection with a statement made by the hon. member for Yale (Mr. Stirling), who does not happen to be in his seat at the moment. That hon. member did not refer to the amount that is being expended for pensions nor to the cost of administration for pensions. My impression has always been that the cost of administration for pensions is comparatively small. The hon. member for Yale was referring to an entirely different matter. He was distinguishing between the cost of administering pensions exclusively, and the other branch of soldiers' civil re-establishment, and if any statement has been made which is not correct the hon. member for Yale will be only too glad to see it corrected. I invite the minister now to give a concise statement of the cost of administering pensions as distinguished from soldiers' civil re-establishment.

Mr. BELAND: There is no information available on the question. There is no proper administration of the pensions except that which is being carried out by the department; there is no administration of pensions outside the department.

Mr. CLARK: Is there no information available to enable the minister in the future to tell us how much it costs to administer pensions to the extent of \$34,000,000 annually?

Mr. BELAND: It would be very involved accounting work, although it might be done. The hon. member will bear in mind that the employees who administer the allowances to the men in hospitals also administer pensions. We have only one department under one roof in Ottawa; all these employees are at their desks and do whatever work of administration is required of them. At one time pensions were administered by a pension board entirely outside of the department; that was previous to 1921. It was my immediate predecessor who combined both the administration of pensions and that of the re-establishment department proper. At the time that was done about 800 employees were