

Our first problem as a nation is, I am sure, to see that those who have made it possible for us to enjoy victory and to retain our much-loved and desired way of living are properly reinstated in the life of this country and that they take their proper places in every phase of our national activities. This should not be so difficult a matter for us in Canada as it is with most of the other nations. Some few nations, perhaps, like the United States, Australia and New Zealand, are in much the same position as Canada, but for the nations of Europe rehabilitation will be a much more difficult problem than it is for us in Canada. For our more favoured position our people should be grateful.

The minister has made his remarks this afternoon very brief. That is rather an exception in the case of the Minister of Veterans Affairs, but it is an exception we all appreciate. He spoke of the veterans affairs committee and his satisfaction at the work which has been done by the members. I might say, as a member of that committee, that we have been sitting for the past five or six weeks, meeting on an average about four days a week, from half-past ten in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon. The veterans affairs committee, as the minister said the other evening, compares favourably with any other veterans' committees we have had in the past. I have had the honour and the pleasure of sitting on some of those committees, and I know that one idea actuated all their work, namely, to see to it that the very best legislation could be obtained for the veteran. I should say in this connection that the veterans have had the benefit of the work of the returned men's associations, and for the past twenty or twenty-five years we could not and would not have had in this country the good legislation which sometimes we think we have if it had not been for the efforts of the various soldier organizations. This country and the returned men of Canada owe a great debt to the Canadian Legion and other such organizations of returned men.

Gratuities are not something entirely new. I remember that when the minister spoke before the committee some time ago he gave great credit for the work which was done in this regard from 1916 until the present time, and I think he then mentioned that the gratuities after the war of 1914-18 were considered generous for that day. I might recall what was paid following the last war; for three years or more of service overseas, six months pay and allowance of rank; for two years or more overseas, five months pay and allowance of rank; for one year overseas, four months pay and

allowance; for less than one year overseas, three months pay and allowance.

We have had the benefit of the experience and the legislation of the past, and I would point out, when we hear criticism, as we often do, of what was done after the war of 1914-18, that the men who legislated at that time had not the experience of former wars. It was practically a new field. I agree with the minister's statement on a former occasion, that the men at that time did a good job. As far as these war service grants are concerned, every section of the bill has been carefully considered by the committee; and I think it is one of the least contentious measures, if not the least contentious, that will come before the veterans affairs committee. I base that opinion on the fact that the legion and other war veterans' organizations which appeared before us had less criticism and offered less advice on this measure than on any of the others.

The minister has mentioned a section which was particularly difficult for the members of the committee, and that is the section dealing with gratuities and benefits to men of the services discharged for misconduct. Many of our sittings were taken up in discussing this difficult problem. The members of the committee were most anxious that no injustice should be done to members returning from overseas. We all had in mind that very often a good soldier, with two or three years' active service, because he has been overwrought or for some other reason has committed an offence which is regarded as a serious military infraction and is given a term of imprisonment or some other detention for misconduct. This was reacting against the soldier in the old act and it was felt that in the new one something should be done for such men.

There was quite a feeling in the committee that this section should be eliminated altogether and that all men who had served overseas, irrespective of whether there was a charge of misconduct against them or not, should be given the gratuity. However, the matter having been thoroughly discussed and considered from every point of view, it was felt that this could not be done. But the next best thing was done—I will not say the next best thing but probably the best thing—and that was the decision that a board of review should be set up to consider every case of misconduct. The members of the board of review sat with the committee in all their sittings and heard opinions of members, heard opinions of men in the armed services, army, navy and air force; and I am satisfied that this board of review, when it sets about its work, will see that no injustice is done to any deserving man who has been