

*Forces—Reinstatement in Employment*

the subject matter which has been given us, and that is the subject matter of Bill No. 5. The hon. member may be discussing important matters, but surely he is not discussing the bill.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): On a point of order—

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no point of order. This is debate on the second reading of a bill, and the hon. member is speaking within the rules.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): On second reading of a bill surely it is the right of an hon. member to discuss its deficiencies. Surely he is permitted to discuss what is lacking in the bill. He could discuss alternatives in matters of policy.

Mr. MARTIN: Yes, but that is not what is being done.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already ruled that the hon. member is in order, and I would ask that he be allowed to continue without further interruptions.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): I did not hear what Your Honour said.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): He says you are all right; go ahead.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have said that the argument of the hon. member is in order, and that he is entitled to proceed without further interruptions.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): May I point out that the hon. member for Trinity discussed the Atlantic charter.

Mr. MARTIN: He was certainly at sea.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): The following words appear in the preamble to the bill:

Whereas in view of the necessity of raising large military forces for service in the present war and for the defence of Canada, a great national problem will be presented when the members of those forces complete their service and are to be returned to civil employment.

I take it that the principle of the bill before us has to do with the whole question of reestablishment and rehabilitation. I have no desire to enter into any controversy with the Minister of Pensions and National Health or with the Minister of Labour, but we should have from both ministers statements prefacing this bill and the bill respecting vocational training which is to come later.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I promised the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Hansell) at the last session that I would make

[Mr. Martin.]

such a statement. It was my intention to make it when the war appropriation bill was before us, because I thought that that would be a more appropriate occasion than this to deal with the whole question of rehabilitation and reconstruction. The argument has broadened out this afternoon and it may be necessary to make this statement before then.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): My point was that this bill, the bill dealing with vocational training, and the bill dealing with soldier land settlement ought to have been prefaced by a comprehensive statement by one or more ministers outlining the whole scheme. No person can discuss this particular bill by itself. It is a small part of a great picture, and perhaps I was putting it too strongly when I said that it represented only a gesture; it is not much more than a gesture taken by itself. It must be considered in the light of what the government proposes to do in the whole field. This bill will touch only a limited number of people; it will touch only those who had jobs before the war. It cannot do anything for the man who joined the army from college or high school. This bill deals specifically with that group of men who had employment and who were not filling jobs that had been held previously by other men who had joined the army. As I say, this is only a small part of a complicated jig-saw puzzle, and I think the ministers might have given us a panoramic view of the whole thing and then brought down the different measures they had in mind. Instead of that, we are going forward on a piece by piece basis, and it is not as easy to see the scheme they have in mind.

It does seem to me that of necessity there are two weaknesses in the bill. The loopholes left for the employer are very wide. It may not be easy to narrow them down, but they certainly are too wide at present. For instance, section 4 reads:

In any proceedings for the violation of section 3 of this act, it shall be a defence for the employer to prove,—

(c) that, by reason of a change of circumstances, other than the engagement of some other person to replace him, it was not reasonably practicable to reinstate him or that his reinstatement in an occupation and under conditions not less favourable to him than those which would have been applicable to him had he not been accepted for services with the armed forces was impracticable,

The difficulty, of course, will be to prove whether or not it is practicable to reinstate a man. I am not a lawyer, but I imagine that a good lawyer could drive through that with a two-ton truck. Then the next clause reads:

(d) that he was physically or mentally incapable of performing work available in the employer's service.