

tions on this important piece of legislation. Before doing so, may I take this opportunity of thanking hon. members in all parts of the house who were very kind in offering words of congratulation to me when I had the honour of seconding the address in reply to the speech from the throne. Those words were all too flattering but nonetheless greatly appreciated. I also wish to thank my friends in the press gallery for the complimentary references they made about my speech. Many of them represent newspapers, the policy of which is diametrically opposed to some of the ideas I expressed, but they were in every instance most fair to me. This speaks volumes for those of our friends who sit in the press gallery doing an important piece of work. It is impossible for them to quote all the words said in this house; nevertheless it is their duty to interpret to the public what goes on here, and all members will agree with me when I say they discharge an important task very well indeed.

I should like to join with the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol) in congratulating the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) upon bringing down this legislation, and I think it is to be noted that the first measure brought down by the new minister is one dealing with returned men. That will be to his undying glory. Of course it is natural that he should bring down this legislation, for he himself was a sailor and sailed on British ships during the last war.

It has been suggested, I believe almost entirely from outside this house, that this legislation should be left until the war is finished or almost finished. I am in full accord with prosecuting this war with all vigour and doing all we can to win it. Nothing must be left undone; no one must be taken from any service which would contribute to the winning of the war. That is our first aim, our important task at the present time. But there are doubtless some whose service cannot be used at this time directly in the winning of the war, and those people should, I believe, devote their time and their minds to the introduction of legislation which will assist in rehabilitating those who are giving their all at this time of the nation's peril.

In Great Britain great attention is being given to the question of rehabilitation. It was my privilege, together with five other members of this house, to be in the House of Lords when His Gracious Majesty delivered the speech opening parliament, and I will quote some of the words of that speech:

My government, in consultation with the allied governments, and with the goodwill of the government of the United States of America are considering the urgent problems which will face them when the nations now enduring the tyranny of the oppressor have regained their freedom.

In Great Britain, therefore, it would appear that they are not leaving this problem until the war is over or almost over, but are tackling it now. We all recall that after the last war men were discharged from the army and had no employment. We have heard to-day from many members of instances they know of where men were discharged and never did regain employment. We do not want that condition to prevail when this war is over. Men must not be discharged from the army until they have some tangible means of supporting themselves.

I would join with the member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) in paying a tribute to the Minister of Pensions and National Health (Mr. Mackenzie). I also sat on the committee on pensions and rehabilitation which functioned during the last session of parliament. I know something of the interest which the minister took in that committee, and I join entirely with all that the hon. member for Cape Breton South has said with regard to the minister. I know that the minister is devoting a great deal of his time towards devising ways and means so that the lot of the returned soldier will be made easier when the war is over. But not only must we consider the lot of the returned man; we must think of all of the working people of the country.

It has been said that this is a war of machines. Accordingly there are thousands of men now working in armament plants of various kinds who will be thrown out of work after the war. It should be the duty of this house to consider ways and means whereby these men will have other work to which they can go. None of us wants to live over again the years from 1932 to 1936, when thousands of people in this country were unemployed. The city of Brantford, which I represent, was before this war the fourth export city of the dominion. It is essentially an industrial city. But I recall that in the years from 1932 to 1936 practically twenty-five per cent of the people of that great industrial centre were on relief through no fault of their own. They suffered long continued and enforced idleness while their women and children suffered with them; and what was true of Brantford was true of practically every other industrial city, not only in this dominion, but throughout the world.