

*Forces—Reinstatement in Employment*

principle of the bill. In the first part it appears to deal with almost any returned soldier. It is an act to provide for the reinstatement in civil employment of individuals who enlist for service in His Majesty's forces. That is the first part. And then, the second: to provide for the reinstatement in civil employment of individuals who perform essential war employment.

The bill deals with the first classification, namely, the reinstatement in civil employment of individuals who enlist for service in His Majesty's forces, and it contains the expression "service in His Majesty's forces" sixteen times. So far as I can see this measure pertains almost wholly to individuals enlisting for service in the armed forces. There may be a portion of it—and I must confess I have not been able to find that portion—which pertains to individuals who perform essential war employment. I assume that expression refers to individuals engaged in industrial plants.

Let us for a moment consider the soldiers who worked in the iron and steel business, with which I am more familiar, and include the men right back to the miners in the iron mine.

Mr. MITCHELL: The words "or who perform essential war employment" are to be stricken out. It was an error in drafting. I shall move an amendment for that purpose.

Mr. MacNICOL: I am sorry to hear that those words are to be struck out, unless the minister is to introduce another bill to provide for these.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): What did the minister say?

Mr. MITCHELL: That those words are to be struck out of the title, and I am to incorporate a measure of that kind in another bill.

Mr. MacNICOL: I am glad to hear that.

The bill pertains largely to industry, and I call particular attention to these words:

And whereas many employers of persons who have enlisted to serve in His Majesty's forces in the present war have voluntarily undertaken to reinstate in employment such persons, following their honourable discharge or demobilization from His Majesty's forces . . . and whereas it is deemed expedient for the security, defence, peace, order and welfare of Canada that provision should be made for the orderly reinstatement in their previous employment of such persons aforesaid.

Let me say that the minister can depend on industry, almost to the extent of one hundred per cent, reinstating their men when they come back from overseas. I had something to do with that matter at the end of the last war, and I know the problems which must be overcome. It is a tremendous prob-

[Mr. MacNicol.]

lem, and some time will be required to solve it. No one need doubt what industry will do, despite the scurrilous statements I have heard in the house frequently by men whose statements indicate that they know little or nothing about industry or employment in industry.

Industry will do its part. I have been through that phase, and I know it. But I hope when the bill is changed, as the minister indicated, there will be something in it for the government to do. Industry cannot do it all. I do not find anything in the bill outlining what the government itself may do thus to provide reemployment.

May I say a word about my experience following the last war. The plant with which I was associated had about one thousand employees, more or less, in the first week of November, 1918. Within a month or at all events within a reasonable time after the war, employment had dropped from one thousand to one hundred, more or less. I myself expected every day to be advised that my services were no longer required. Holding an executive position, I knew I was not earning my salary and could hardly look the paymaster in the face and take my salary. My point is that industry will not be able to rehabilitate and reestablish quickly large numbers of returning men, and I want that point to be considered if the bill is to be changed in any way. That interim period between the close of the war and the time when it might be possible for plants to take their men back is a more or less indefinite period, and later I shall suggest some provision to take care of that period.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May I point out to the hon. gentleman that on the second reading of the bill, while a brief reference may be made to the subject matter of its sections, he should stick to the principle of the bill.

Mr. MacNICOL: The principle is the re-employment of returning service men. I had just started to say that the minister has intimated that there will be changes made in reference to those performing essential war employment; and that will be a very large number to be provided for in the bill.

There is another group of men about whom I am worrying. The bill by section 2, paragraphs (b), (i) and (ii), applies to returned men who had employee status on September 9, 1939, and to those who had employment for six months after September 9, 1939. I should like to inquire, where will a great many of the men who enlisted in the first, the second and perhaps the third divisions come in? When these divisions were being mobilized, great numbers of young men from my own