

with. People who knew the man well would probably have a better idea of what would fit the case than the board could get from the diagnosis of some doctor. I am firmly convinced that the people of Canada wish every overseas man or woman who finds himself or herself in a condition of failing health to-day, whether or not his or her disability is directly attributable to overseas service, to receive consideration under the Pension Act. I am convinced that there must be amendments to the act to meet the conditions that exist to-day, and no matter what amendments we might make to the Pension Act, there will still be overseas men left out in the cold if the act is to be strictly and literally interpreted. Probably we have all noted—I have at least—that in the past few months since the meeting of the Canadian Legion in Regina, following the statement made by the Prime Minister that he wished the officers of the pension board to give as liberal an interpretation of the act as they possibly could, we have been able to get relief for many men whom we could not help previously. Undoubtedly a more liberal interpretation of the Pension Act and a more sympathetic administration on the part of the pension commissioners would very often mean a great deal more to the men interested than an amendment to the act itself.

I firmly believe that during this session we must find ways to improve the act and to insure a more sympathetic interpretation of its provisions. Only in this way can we help the poor fellow who is down and out and has no friends to fight his case for him, and who probably is not only in poor condition physically but also mentally. He comes home so depressed that very often he is left alone and nothing is done for him. Even if someone does take up his case it is very, very difficult to help a man so much depressed and discouraged. As has been said by other speakers this afternoon, in many such cases there is nothing on the medical sheet to show any disability, and the men accepted their discharge from the army as being physically fit and in A-1 condition. But we know that the after effects of the severe strains to which they were subjected during their war service do not become apparent until several years after discharge, and we have not been able to care for these men as we should.

I think it is a very good thing indeed that this resolution has been brought to the attention of the house, and I am sure it will do good. I hope it will make every hon. member give the matter careful consideration, and that before the close of the session it will

be so amended that any overseas men who are in need of assistance, whether their disability can be attributed directly to their service overseas or not, will be looked after as the people of Canada, I feel sure, would wish that they should be.

Hon. R. J. MANION (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, I agree with those who have described this as a very important resolution; in fact I consider it a resolution of much greater importance than many of the resolutions which come before the house, and I shall heartily support it.

I agree with my hon. friend who has just taken his seat (Mr. Lang) that many men's records are either lost or misplaced so that the pension commission cannot trace them, and continually it is found that men who really deserve a pension cannot prove any connection between their illness to-day and some illness which they suffered in the army. This is due partly to lost records and partly to the fact that many of our men after the war was over were so anxious to get out of the army and its hardships that they were willing to be certified as A-1 with practically no medical examination at all, although they themselves knew that if they had disclosed their actual condition to the medical board at the time there would have been no question of securing a pension. Years later when their disability becomes more apparent they find it very difficult to prove its direct connection with their war service. In fact I have seen many men endeavouring to get doctors' certificates, but they were very doubtful pension cases. Generally speaking I believe that a reputable physician will not give a certificate unless he feels the man deserves it; the resolution is solid on that ground, I think.

To-day at the conference on unemployment from the Great lakes to the coast a gentleman representing the soldiers of the west told of many very pitiable cases of returned men who are unable to get pensions. I do not say that all of those cases deserve attention, but I do say it is far better for this country, in view of the promises which were made to the men when they were asked to go to the front, to pay ten pensions which are undeserved than to fail to pay one pension which is deserved and thus make a soldier suffer an undeserved hardship. I agree it is time to cease hewing to the line, and that there should be an attitude of very great generosity towards these men. Suppose it does cost a few more million dollars per annum, and it will, this country can afford to look after its heroes in a fair and proper manner. Right in this parliament building is a man who, three or four years