

have accumulated, and that press upon the Government and the Parliament of Canada from different points of view. And in this respect the indeterminate amount, running anywhere from \$400,000,000 to a billion of dollars or more, which would be involved in the proposed cash payment of gratuities, has to be taken into consideration, and it forms an essential factor in the conclusion that is to be based upon an investigation of the matter.

The Government is not and never has been of the opinion that the best way to reconstitute, readjust, and re-establish the returned soldier is by placing in his hand a sum of money over which there should be no governmental supervision, and without any reference to the peculiar and differing conditions and circumstances of each returned soldier. In this respect the Government has not changed its mind, and consequently the reply to both the requests that have been made must be in the negative so far as a cash gratuity or bonus is concerned.

From the time that war casualties began to come in, and when the approaching end of the war was becoming a matter of comparative certainty, and since the Armistice and the consequent demobilization of the soldiers, the Government has not been remiss in giving its most careful attention, with all the sympathy and ability it possessed, to the question of the re-establishment of our men who have returned from overseas, caring for their dependents and those of the men who unfortunately never returned. Whether its conclusions have always been wise or not, it has had perforce to come to conclusions, and to the best of its ability it has put into operation certain forms of relief, of readjustment, and of reconstitution. This policy the Government purposes to continue. Parliament has taken the matter up and by an influential and non-partisan committee it has made investigations into the pension system and various other forms of relief and help, and the benefit of the conclusions arrived at after much care and very thorough consideration has been at the disposal of the Government. This method of pursuing the question has not been abandoned. We have already appointed a pensions committee this year, composed mostly of the members of the former committee with some additional members, and to them has been assigned the duty of considering again the methods which have been so far adopted, and of

making a full investigation into the whole matter of the relief and re-establishment of our soldiers along these lines, with a view to ascertaining what amendments, if any, are necessary, what are the difficulties that are encountered, and how those difficulties may be as far as possible overcome. That duty is laid upon the committee for the present session of Parliament.

In so far as respects the provision of pensions and allowances and the re-establishment of the disabled returned soldier, and the relief which is necessary and which has been and will be cheerfully given to the dependents of both those who have fallen and those who have returned; in respect also to systems of relief provided for under the Land Settlement Act, and the work that is carried on by the Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment Department which is presided over by my colleague, Sir James Lougheed; all these forms of relief and of reconstitution including vocational training and encouragement to those who have been interrupted in the pursuit of their profession and in their training, having as its object as far as possible to fit these men for the work which they will undertake, and the competition which they will encounter in life, and to compensate them as far as possible for the disadvantages which they have suffered—all these various questions will have the sympathy, the co-operation and the support of the Government.

I do not know that I need make any further extended remarks in respect to this matter. It is impossible to dispose of such an important and complicated question at one session, or at two sessions or at many sessions. The returned soldier and his problems are with us, and it remains for the Government, with the co-operation of the business men of the country, and particularly of Parliament as representing the people at large, to pursue what are deemed the sanest and best methods to the extent that this country can provide the funds and appliances that are necessary for the proper re-establishment of the soldiers. It is the duty as well as the privilege of the country to recognize the services of those who at great sacrifice have fought our fight and have borne the brunt of the great effort, the men for whom we should always cherish the most sympathetic and helpful disposition of mind.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The question which has been raised by the right honour-