

Forces—Reinstatement in Employment

Mr. MacNICOL: The minister has announced that he is going to wipe out that last part.

Mr. COLDWELL: The last part is to be struck out, and I regret it because I think the men who are doing essential war work are performing almost as vital a service as the men serving in the armed forces.

Mr. TURGEON: Not the same nature.

Mr. COLDWELL: Or not the same risk; I grant that immediately. I think we have forgotten to some extent that this war can be won only by those nations which can gear up their productive machinery to an extent that will provide the necessary goods. Consequently, the men who are engaged in these productive enterprises are performing a vital part in our war effort and ought to be provided for when war ends. Again I say that in all fairness it can be said that while the men engaged in industry are performing a vital work, they are not taking the risks of the men engaged in active service. I think the original intention of this bill should be carried out. The reinstatement in employment of men now in the armed forces will be only a part of the general problem of reemployment that we shall have to face when this war ends.

I am in accord with those who have urged to-day that a committee of this house should be established to go into the whole matter of post-war reconstruction and human rehabilitation. I think, too, that it would give many private members of this house an outlet for the energy which they have, energy which they feel has been to some degree frustrated. But as far as the beginnings go, the bill is a step in the right direction.

It is called the Civil Employment Reinstatement Act, and the very title of it would seem to indicate that the two groups should have been considered in the one bill, and that a mistake has been made in cutting off from this particular measure those who perform essential war employment.

I am not going to speak at any length to-night, because, as has already been said, the hour is late, and we shall have an opportunity of saying more on the various clauses as they are discussed. But I did want to bring to the attention of the committee that one point which I have very much in mind, that this problem of reemployment will involve not only the men who are engaged in the armed forces, but all those who are engaged

[Mr. Coldwell.]

in essential war effort of every description; and, if I may say so, I do not believe that reliance on private enterprise will either solve this problem or win the war. Before we can win the war against the totalitarian powers, we shall have to have a total war effort, and that, in my opinion, will compel us to take out of the hands of private enterprise war industries and organize them as essential national enterprises.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): We have done much of that already.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): In the preamble, in lines 10 and 11, it states:

. . . with conditions not less favourable to the employee than he would have attained had he not enlisted. . . .

It seems to me that this is slightly ambiguous. On page two—

The CHAIRMAN: We are not on the preamble. We are on section 1, "short title".

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): We are just on the short title? Well, in that regard I should like to ask, will the men who enlisted, who used to work in the House of Commons, be covered under this bill? Will they be taken back in their former positions?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): I should like to know that, because a number have gone from the employment of this house.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): They do not come under this bill.

Mr. GREEN (Vancouver South): Under this clause I want to ask a question which will take some minutes. I wonder whether consideration of the clause can be set over until to-morrow.

Mr. HANSELL: Just before we close, I am a little hazy as to a point of order here.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order before the Chair.

Mr. HANSELL: I am raising the point, because I should like to know. We are on section 1. I wish to know when we take the preamble.

The CHAIRMAN: After all the clauses of the bill, we come to the preamble.

Progress reported.

At eleven o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.