

complain that the spending of money will impoverish the country and will demoralize the men. May I point out that that has not been so during the war. We took these young men, many of whom were riding the rods and were unemployed during the thirties and, for purposes of war, we have made available to them more goods and services than they had ever dreamed of. That has not impoverished Canada. At the present time our country has a higher level of production and a higher standard of living than at any time in her history. Neither has that policy demoralized our men but, as I have already said, it has given them something to live, fight and work for and, if necessary, to die for.

I am convinced these same men will not be demoralized by generous treatment when the war is over. I am equally satisfied that Canada's economy would not be impoverished by such generous treatment. Therefore I express the hope that we will not imagine we have done a complete job merely by setting up more efficient machinery, as we are doing by bringing veterans' affairs under the direction of one department. We must go farther and, so far as our treatment of these men is concerned, we must infuse generosity into that policy. We must also realize that the problem of the rehabilitation of veterans is one of tremendous importance to the future welfare of our country.

While I am on my feet I should like to add my support so some things that have been said by other hon. members. I believe it was the leader of the opposition who spoke particularly about the constant use of the expression "pre-enlistment origin." It does seem to me that that is one place where generosity might be infused into government policy immediately. As members of parliament we have brought to our attention over and over again cases with respect to men who were accepted in the armed forces as "A-1", but who upon discharge are told that no pension is available because their ailments are of pre-enlistment origin. I need not stress the matter in this chamber because I am sure all hon. members know of many such cases. I am sure, too, that if the matter were put to a free vote of the membership of the house there would be no question but that there would be a wide change in policy in connection with the awarding of pensions to men discharged from the forces for medical reasons.

I would stress, too, the importance of liaison between the new department of veterans' affairs and the department of reconstruction, which it is proposed to set up. Indeed, to go farther, one might point out that there is need

for special liaison between the department of veterans' affairs and the government as a whole, for if we are to be able on a long-term basis to do anything for the men discharged either now or at the conclusion of the war, it will depend to a very large extent upon our whole economy. It is exceedingly important that we pay particular attention to the whole problem of reconstruction, and I would urge a close liaison between the department of veterans' affairs and the department of reconstruction. In fact, more than a liaison is required. It is necessary that the government realize that any successful handling of the rehabilitation of veterans will depend upon the effectiveness of the reconstruction programme of whatever government is in power.

May I express the hope that when this new department is set up it will be the occasion for revising many of the details of administration of matters affecting veterans. At the present time our thoughts turn naturally to those who are now being discharged, and to others who will be discharged when this conflict is over. Let us not, however, forget the veterans of the last war. When I say that I do not mean merely that we should continue paying to them those pensions or allowances they are now receiving. Rather I urge that we give consideration to a revision of the Pension Act and the War Veterans' Allowance Act with a view to providing a better deal for those men who served a generation ago.

When the Minister of Pensions and National Health was speaking he made reference to widows who receive allowances under orders in council tied into the War Veterans' Allowance Act, but I did not hear clearly what he said. I would express the hope, however, that this might be the occasion for a revision of that act and a revision of the orders in council which govern the payment of allowances to widows of veterans of the last war. It is my hope that this might be the time when all these matters will be considered. I would hope that these matters might be brought to the new department of veterans' affairs, not just as a technical procedure of transferring from one branch to another, but with a view to bringing about an upward revision of the benefits and considerations given to these people. Hospitalization is another matter which must be thoroughly considered.

I have taken these few minutes to say that we in this group without any question welcome the introduction of this resolution. We agree that it is a good idea to bring under one department all matters relating to veterans, but we urge upon the government and hon. members generally that they must realize that is not the