

Mr. MacNEIL: I have no desire to question the hon. member's statement. I brought this matter to the attention of the committee as an indication of the general procedure in connection with the employment of ex-service men. The letter is from an organization known as the Veterans of France and is signed by N. M. L. Rolfe over the seal of the organization. The complaint is not against the hon. member or the department, but rather against the procedure. It is that when the list of ex-service men available for work is prepared by the veterans' assistance commission, it is again scrutinized on the basis of political considerations, apparently in regard to their eligibility to share in political patronage, and is o.k.-ed by some representative of the hon. member or by the hon. member himself. Then they say it is again scrutinized by the department, and that by reason of this procedure some ex-service men who might have obtained employment are denied that opportunity. It is just that, with the hon. member for Vancouver South, I protest against such procedure, because it results in the elimination of some men who, I feel, should be entitled to employment. They state definitely that on some of the projects now under way in Halifax a very small percentage of ex-service men are employed. I hope to hear from the hon. member for Halifax a denial that such procedure is followed, and that regardless of political considerations all deserving ex-service men are granted an opportunity to obtain employment on these projects.

Mr. GREEN: What is the present position with regard to the number of pensioners who are getting assistance?

Mr. POWER: There are about 8,500.

Mr. GREEN: Then there has been a substantial reduction in the number of pensioners requiring relief?

Mr. POWER: Yes. A good many of them have obtained jobs and quite a number more received the war veterans' allowance during the past year.

Item agreed to.

Services to veterans and dependents—Care of patients, \$3,045,287.

Mr. MacNEIL: The other evening the minister stated that there was an increase in the total appropriation for hospital allowances and care of patients. I have some difficulty in understanding the figures he utilized. Apparently he took the actual expenditures for 1936 and 1937, according to his statement on page 3071 of Hansard, and compared them

with the estimate for the present year. But in both estimates, for care of patients and for hospital allowances, there are definite decreases indicated this year. Is it possible for the minister now to give comparative figures for the fiscal years 1936-37 and 1937-38 as regards provision for care of patients and provision for hospital allowances, as well as comparative figures with regard to hospital admissions, with particular reference to class 1 patients?

Mr. POWER: It has been very difficult to get the exact figures, on account of the different set-up of the estimates this year. I do not think I can get that information for my hon. friend without going to a great deal more work than I have had time to do since I last saw him. There has been a change in the system since 1936 in that, as my hon. friend knows, class 5 has been established, which is really a clearing-house for the other classes. So it is very difficult for us to obtain comparable figures.

Mr. MacNEIL: I shall not press the minister if it entails a great deal of work, but I asked for these figures because of the general concern that exists with regard to the application of P.C. 91 as against P.C. 1842. There are some points which have been brought to my attention in dealing with individual cases. It is alleged that a number of men have been transferred from class 1 to other classes and thereby have been deprived of pay and allowances, and there has been some readjustment in regard to reclassification which has reacted to the disadvantage of the men.

The next point was with regard to dental treatment. That was touched upon the other night, but I wish to add that when dental treatment is offered a man living in a remote district, away from a departmental institution, and it is required that he receive that treatment in a departmental institution, no provision is made for transportation expenses, so that it is practically impossible, as I understand the situation, for that man to take advantage of the regulation. The expense of travelling probably would be greater than the expense of having dental treatment at home.

Mr. POWER: I suppose my hon. friend knows that under P.C. 1842, the former order in council, dental treatment was never given as class 2 at all, and that under P.C. 91, passed in 1936, dental treatment is given as class 2. So there is that much improvement in comparison with the old order in council; I think that is pretty clear.