

Mr. GREEN: This letter was written in January.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): It is not correct.

Mr. GREEN: It is correct in Vancouver, unless conditions have been changed since I left there.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I am sorry, but I must disagree. The Department of Pensions and National Health are charged with the responsibility of following up every discharged man who is not employed. There are four or five different classes of benefits available to him, such as vocational training, education and otherwise. If he is not able to take advantage of any of these, the department is charged with the responsibility of finding him employment. If it cannot find him employment, it provides him with benefits for fifty-two weeks within a period of eighteen months of his discharge. So, whoever wrote that letter was not very familiar with the actual terms of the legislation.

Mr. GREEN: That was written by a man who is on a committee which is helping my hon. friend to place these men. The fact is that in the majority of the employment offices across Canada there is no representative of the Department of Pensions and National Health; they are staffed entirely by the Department of Labour. The Department of Labour have not said to their employment offices that preference in jobs shall be given to men coming back from the forces. I submit that instructions to that effect should go out to every employment office across Canada. The result would then be that when a returned man goes into an employment office, no matter where it may be and whether or not there is a veterans' welfare officer there, he will receive first consideration. If there are two or three men applying for one job, the preference will go to the soldier. My question is perfectly simple: Is the government prepared to direct its agencies to that effect, or is the government not prepared to do so?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): May I say to my hon. friend that as far as the department of pensions is concerned, we follow up every discharged case. Where employment is not provided, it is our duty as a department to follow up the case. This is done through our welfare officers. If we cannot find employment, there are four or five other ways of looking after the case.

Mr. GREEN: The Minister of Pensions and National Health should be supporting me instead of trying to knock me down.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I am.

Mr. GREEN: The position is that the representatives of the Department of Labour in these agencies have not had instructions to give preference to the men sent to them by the Minister of Pensions and National Health. I am asking that the Department of Labour give their men those instructions. That would help the Minister of Pensions and National Health when he has 50,000 men, instead of 1,000, to handle. He will need all the help he can get from the Department of Labour. I should like to know from the Minister of Labour whether instructions to that effect will be given.

Mr. MITCHELL: I do not think I can go any further with my hon. friend than I did last time, and say that so far as the Department of Labour is concerned there will be the closest cooperation with the Department of Pensions and National Health. Everything practical that can be done for the returned soldier will be done. I take it from the statements of my hon. friend that up to the present moment there has been very little or no criticism of the treatment of the returned soldiers.

Mr. GREEN: Will the minister look into this question of instructing his agencies to give a preference to the returned men?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Certainly.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Is there one of these placement officers in New Brunswick, and if so, where is he located?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I have not the full details because this is really not my bill; but if any hon. member feels that the welfare officers in any province are insufficient in number to look after the situation adequately, I shall be very glad to recommend an increase in their number in any centres which are appropriate for the purpose of looking after our returning soldiers.

Mr. MacINNIS: I do not know, Mr. Chairman, whether this discussion is strictly in order, but yesterday evening I called attention to the danger we are in of dividing the returned men, on the one side, from the ordinary workers on the other. I saw too much of that after the last war. If we are going to take the position now that there are not going to be sufficient jobs to go round after the war, and that consequently people are going to find themselves in difficult circumstances, we are at once admitting defeat in our attempts to reorganize society after the war is over. The position we shall have