

Manual on Rehabilitation very useful in our work. Incidentally, any changes that are made from time to time will be mailed to the various members of the committee. If there is nothing else to be dealt with, inasmuch as the minister's statement is quite long, with your permission I will now call on him.

Mr. GREEN: There is one other thing, Mr. Chairman. Which bill are you planning to start off with?

The CHAIRMAN: With war veterans' credits.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE: Yes, credits.

The CHAIRMAN: Re-establishment credits. That will be on Tuesday next. With your permission, gentlemen, I will call on the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Hon. Ian Mackenzie.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen, in moving for the appointment of this select committee of ex-service members of the House of Commons, I fulfilled a pledge which I have repeatedly made, that at the end of the war there would be a review by a parliamentary committee of all our legislation for veterans.

There are, in my opinion, two principal tasks before this committee, and they will entail a great deal of concentrated work.

The first is the general review of the state of present legislation and of its administration which has been promised repeatedly.

The second is the enactment, or perhaps I should say—re-enactment, of a large number of measures adopted during the war by or in council under the authority of the War Measures Act.

It is thought that this committee might derive some advantage if, at the outset of its deliberations, a review of the history of pensions and rehabilitation legislation following the former war were placed on the record. Following this, I shall endeavour to inform the committee of what has been done since the outbreak of the present war in 1939.

Interesting parallels and a number of important differences in experience will be observed—all of them instructive in relation to the responsibilities of the present committee.

Parliamentary committees such as this played a notable part in the development of legislation for veterans of the war 1914-18, as they have with respect to the program in effect for veterans of the present war. On reviewing the record, I find that, prior to the outbreak of the present war, veteran legislation was reviewed by committees of the House of Commons on no fewer than twelve occasions. The first such committee sat in 1916. Similar committees sat each year until 1922 and thereafter in 1924, 1928, 1930, 1933 and 1936.

The pension and rehabilitation program for the veterans of the first world war was developed in the face of vastly greater difficulties than confront us today. When war broke in 1914, pension was a part of the army pay and allowance regulations, and awards were made by army officers. We had no pension act, no military or veterans hospitals, no department of government with special responsibility for veterans. We had no experience, no legislation and no administrative organization. Nor were there precedents to guide the legislators of those days. This was the world's first experience of total war, when the nation's entire young manhood was mobilized. The re-establishment and reconstruction problems were vastly different from those relating to the demobilization of the comparatively small armies of former wars.

It is greatly to Canada's credit that the program for ex-service men adopted at the close of the war of 1914-18 was recognized throughout the world as the most enlightened and advanced that had ever been undertaken by any nation. Today with the advantage of hindsight we are conscious of its numerous im-