

Lemieux) has brought this subject to the attention of the House. The hon. gentleman has had a good deal of experience, having been closely connected with the Department of Labour when he was a member of the late Government, and his judgment on a question such as is being discussed this afternoon is therefore of considerable value. I am also glad, because it gives me the opportunity of correcting some misapprehensions that exist concerning this question of the establishment of labour bureaus.

My hon. friend has referred to some delegations that waited upon me some two years ago. I think there were five delegations altogether. They were all inspired by the same individual, who had a personal object in view. He desired a position under this Government at a large salary. The same individual, I am advised, many and many a time waited upon my hon. friend when he was in the late Government, and also upon my predecessor in this office, pressing upon them the advisability of establishing such a system of labour exchanges as my hon. friend has advocated to-day. I do not know whether I should congratulate my hon. friend upon having changed his opinion since he was in office, and when he had the power of granting the request made by this individual. At any rate, he did not grant the request. It does not appear to have struck him and my predecessor so favourably when they were in power and in a position to grant such a system of labour exchanges.

My hon. friend from Rouville has referred to conditions in Germany, Great Britain and Australia. It is very often said that there is in Australia a federal system of labour exchanges, but such is not the case. The Commonwealth of Australia has made no enactments whatever for the establishment of labour bureaus, but I believe that two or three of the separate states have. In Great Britain and Germany, where there are systems of labour exchanges, they are coupled up with a national system of unemployment insurance, sickness funds, and several other provisions for the amelioration of the condition of the working people. While I do not speak with certainty, I think that these matters are within the jurisdiction of the provincial legislatures, and not within the jurisdiction of the Federal Parliament.

My hon. friend has also referred to conditions in the United States. In the year 1907 the United States established a system

of labour bureaus, although it is not a perfect one, as my hon. friend has stated. During the last eight years, according to a report recently made, they have provided positions for about 40,000 men. We have in this country an agency at work which, during the same number of years, although we have a population of only eight millions as against ninety odd millions in the United States, has provided positions for about 130,000 men. My hon. friend is aware that the Immigration Department of this Government has for years been engaged to a large extent in providing positions on the land for the unemployed who desire work, and beginning with the year 1907, when the late Government was in power, the positions furnished have averaged about 16,000 a year, excluding the excursions that go out to the West every year to assist in harvesting.

My hon. friend has referred to the conditions which will exist when this war is ended. While I think it is right that we should begin now to think about those conditions, there is no certainty whatever that there will be anything like the immigration about which my hon. friend speaks almost with certainty, and I do not think it is wise at present to arrange by legislation for conditions which may not exist at the close of the war. We are taking steps in that direction not only for the soldiers who return invalided, but for those who will return when the war is over. My hon. friend knows that a Military Hospitals Commission, under the presidency of Senator Lougheed, was established by this Government some months ago. A conference of the Premiers or other representatives of the various provinces was held at Ottawa, and all the provinces were represented with the exception of British Columbia, from which we received a letter explaining why no representative could be sent. These representatives held a separate conference, the result of which was that they offered to undertake the work of securing employment for disabled soldiers. Since then, as I understand, a provincial commission has been appointed in each of the provinces, and these commissions in turn have appointed local committees. For instance, there is a commission in the province of Ontario, and I had a little experience of a local committee appointed under that commission in my own city of St. Thomas. The local committee is instructed to meet disabled soldiers at the station on their return, and it provides comforts for them in the meantime,