

and are not likely to be able to qualify physically in future, we maintain the closest liaison with the Department of Pensions and National Health. When such a man is discharged, an officer is present for the purpose of instructing that man as to what he should do and to whom he should apply, if it happens to be a case that is not to be sent to hospital; otherwise he goes to a pensions and national health hospital, where he is cared for. Under the provision made in order to help bridge the gap, notwithstanding the fact the soldier has been discharged he still receives thirty days' pay.

Mr. GREEN: I suggest to the government in all seriousness that it would be well to look into the situation and see if some further arrangement could not be made in order that these men may be restored to health before they are discharged from the army. At the moment, in many instances they are leaving the army in poor physical condition and are forced on relief. I have had such cases happen in Vancouver time and again.

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend and I might as well understand each other. My hon. friend says we should see that they are restored to health before they are discharged from the army. I realize the difficulties which confront a man after he has served in the army, and I do not make this statement harshly at all, but I do not think it is the duty of the army medical services to look after a man after it has been demonstrated that he cannot be restored to the physical condition which will enable him to serve. That is properly the function of the Department of Pensions and National Health, which looks after the ex-service men. The service men are looked after by the army hospitals. I will agree with my hon. friend that between the two departments all cases should be covered, and I will be only too happy to maintain a close liaison in order to see that the man does not fall between the two departments. I want to add that long before my hon. friend spoke—and I know my hon. friend will believe this—my colleague and I had many conferences with a committee, which has already been set up, in an endeavour to establish the best possible working plan in order that the soldier may be cared for at all stages.

At the same time the relative responsibilities of the two departments are recognized. It is no use for me to try to run the Department of Pensions and National Health. It is no use for me to run hospitals for the purpose of helping to restore men to a better state of health if they are not going to be

[Mr. Ralston.]

soldiers in the end. My hon. friend will understand that. All the facilities of the medical services of the army are required in connection with men who will be fit for active service; and when we have a Department of Pensions and National Health with hospitals and medical officers all over this country, it does seem to me that we have to look to that department to take the responsibility for those men. But with regard to getting the soldier into one of these institutions, assisting him to get there, advising him as to how to get there and seeing that he is not harshly treated in any way, I am one hundred per cent with my hon. friend. I can assure him that anything that has not been done in that respect will be remedied, if I can possibly do so. I think, however, there is less than he believes in the way of harshness as far as the Department of National Defence is concerned. If we believe a man is going to be fit in the end, we will treat him; we will provide convalescent homes and do anything else that may be necessary. If it is demonstrated that he is not going to be fit, then it seems to me, from the point of view of both the man and the country, that there is no use in keeping him on the strength of the army. He does not belong there. He becomes an ex-service man, entitled to the protection and the benefits to which ex-service men are entitled under the regulations.

Mr. GREEN: It does not make much difference which department is responsible, as long as the responsibility lies somewhere.

Mr. RALSTON: It makes a difference to me.

Mr. GREEN: That may be, but from the point of view of the Canadian people it does not make much difference which department has to do the work. These men certainly should be given as much treatment as possible before they are sent back to civilian life.

Mr. RALSTON: Now my hon. friend has said something.

Mr. GREEN: That is really what I have been trying to say all the way through. I think the whole governmental policy in that regard should be reconsidered, because the present practice is unfair, and I am afraid it is going to do a great deal to discourage recruiting.

Mr. HOWDEN: Would such ex-service man be entitled to treatment in a pension hospital, without himself having a pension?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): In many instances remedial treatment has been given for many weeks, with the definite purpose of reconditioning men who are medically