

gard to that amendment? Did he say that it was something to be voted down, something not to be considered? He said that that amendment, like all other matters affecting the returned soldiers, was one which could most profitably and properly be dealt with by a committee of this house on which all parties would be represented. My hon. friend mentioned that at the next session of parliament, in 1928, a committee of this house would be formed for the purpose of considering whatever might be presented to it, and that this amendment might well be considered by that committee at that time. That was in 1928.

Mr. BENNETT: In 1927.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The amendment was moved in 1927 but in 1928 the committee was formed. In 1928 did my hon. friend move his amendment? Did he move it in 1929? He moved it in 1927 when he was told that it would be referred to a committee composed of members from the different parties of this house. That committee went into all the questions which they thought it advisable to go into, including, I am informed, the very matter of my hon. friend's resolution. They thought it inadvisable to include that amendment in their report and evidently their reasons were sufficient to my hon. friend because he did not come forward to move that amendment at any subsequent session. May I say further that the report presented at the session of 1928 was unanimous and was accepted. I do not think my hon. friend is helping his case or the case of the returned soldiers when to-day he parades in parliament and in the country an amendment which he moved in 1927; or when in one breath he talks about taking these matters out of politics and in the next breath offers the amendment as evidence of his interest in the well-being of the returned men, especially when, as a matter of fact, in this parliament during the two sessions subsequent to its being moved he said nothing further about the amendment.

As a matter of fact, there was an amendment upon which a main debate in the house took place, also moved by my hon. friend. The amendment was that the Pensions Act shall be construed and administered as remedial legislation and that if there be reasonable doubt as to the right of an applicant to pension, the applicant shall be given the benefit of the doubt. What was the position taken in regard to that amendment? It was very similar to what I have just stated. My hon. friend the Solicitor General (Mr. Cannon) drew the attention of the

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

house to the fact that all legislation is supposed to be remedial and that in the circumstances there was no necessity for an amendment of that character; the house had made clear its will and its wish in the matter, and that was all that was necessary.

May I say that after giving a great deal of time and careful thought and study to this question, the government has come to the conclusion that the existing legislation is not adequate. In particular it has been borne in upon us that there are a large number of returned men who, while not suffering from any disability immediately traceable to some particular happening, are nevertheless finding themselves breaking down through causes more or less unknown. In other words, they are experiencing after a number of years what I think would be described in medical terms as the effects of deferred reaction. Though they went through the strain of the war, though they suffered mentally and physically as they did in those years, the fact that at the time they were strong and in good health led to nothing being immediately visible as a consequence of the strain they had been called upon to endure. As the years have gone by however, and the system has weakened from other causes, the strain of past years has begun to tell and many men are breaking down to-day apparently for no other reason than that of the strain of the war period. This class of cases has become, so I understand, the most difficult with which the Department of Pensions and National Health has to deal. They are referred to at times as "the burnt outs." The government feels that some measure should be introduced which will be of service in meeting cases of that kind, and the minister will introduce shortly a bill which will give to parliament the views of the ministry, arrived at after a careful study of the matter. As I have indicated, that bill will be referred to a committee of this house and an effort will be made to see that the returned soldier is well represented on that committee. I would ask that as far as possible all the members of this house unite in endeavouring, so far as may be in their power, to see that this committee is given the fullest information with regard to those classes of cases which are of concern to the war veteran and to his dependents, and to bring to the attention of the committee every class and kind of disability and every flaw with respect to the existing administration of the Pensions Act which may be known both to them and to those who are outside the walls of this house.

It is the desire of this government, and in speaking for the government I believe I speak for the parliament of Canada, that full justice