

*Forces—Reinstatement in Employment*

Mr. SLAGHT: Are you? Well, if it is your philosophy of life that you must attack a bill which contains a plain provision, in language which anybody in high school could understand, simply because you think it is brought in by a government whose past action you do not approve—if that is your philosophy of life, then let me refer you to some other country, a European country, where you would belong.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): If this country were going to be under Liberal government all the time, I might do that.

Mr. REID: If there is going to be a free-for-all, let us have it.

Mr. SLAGHT: May I request my hon. friend to leave the hon. member opposite to me.

I am not here to make a provocative speech. I want to lead the way for the hon. member for Trinity and the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Douglas).

Mr. REID: You are doing fine.

Mr. SLAGHT: Now, it comes to this: The hon. member for Weyburn used these expressions, if I heard him correctly: "The bill is a mere improvisation"; "the bill is an empty gesture." Is he reassuring the soldiers in the armed forces when he tells parliament and the country that this bill is a mere empty gesture. Is that the way to promote recruiting?

Mr. JACKMAN: Is that what it is called?

Mr. SLAGHT: We are developing a number of humorists in the house! I regard the bill introduced by the Minister of Labour, whose shoe-strings the attacking member over there is not fit to tie, as one which ought to stand, and ought to receive the serious consideration of the house.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is a little too strong.

Mr. SLAGHT: The hon. member for Weyburn says it does not matter whether the legion or labour approves the bill. When did he appoint himself to indict the approval of the legion in this country? Is he, like an absent leader, a self-appointed gentleman who will say to the legion of this country that they do not understand what they are doing when they approve the bill—or when labour approves it?

I only wish my hon. friend and other hon. members could understand that great harm can be done by that sort of loose attack. Of course it is loose attack. I find from the parliamentary guide that he has been here seven years. He came in 1935, when I did.

[Mr. C. E. Johnston.]

He has many admirable qualities, and makes some excellent suggestions, with one of which the other day I agreed. But let me say this—

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): That does not make them excellent—because you agree with them.

Mr. SLAGHT: Oh, what wit! What magnificent satire! Mark Twain must bow his head to my hon. friend!

We are not here to listen to cheap witticisms. I think my hon. friend has occupied his seat pretty regularly for seven years. When a bill comes along which in sections 3, 5 and 6—

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): And 4.

Mr. SLAGHT: Yes, and 4—when a bill comes along which in sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 gives splendid recognition of the men who have worked, and the men who have been in the armed forces, he wants the country to understand that it is an empty gesture. Where was he for five years, up until the time war broke out? He could have introduced a bill of this kind.

Mr. MacINNIS: Oh, no, he couldn't.

Mr. SLAGHT: Oh, yes, he could; make no mistake about that. It is not a money bill.

Mr. MacINNIS: Of course it is.

Mr. SLAGHT: He could have introduced a bill of this kind up until war broke out.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Absolutely.

Mr. SLAGHT: He could have introduced a resolution providing care for those men, but he was as silent as the grave. Yet when the new minister, of whom he ought to be proud, introduces his first bill in the House of Commons, my hon. friend thinks it a smart thing to describe it as an empty gesture. Please do not let us try to get along in this way. I give my hon. friend great credit for desiring to be helpful. I paid a tribute to all three groups the other day and I repeat it. I pay a tribute to my hon. friend's leader. He would not have made the speech my hon. friend made this afternoon. I rise only to say that if we are to get along, I do not believe that disruptive and provocative speeches such as we have listened to from the hon. member for Weyburn will reassure either the working-men of this country or the soldiers in our armed forces.

Mr. J. A. ROSS (Souris): Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief, but I want to make a few remarks on this bill, notwithstanding what the previous speaker has said. This bill is to provide for the reinstatement in civil life of individuals who enlist for service in his