

In other words, the Department of Labour—and I am afraid it is that department rather than the Department of Pensions and National Health which is the sinner—has not adopted a policy whereby men of the fighting forces shall receive the preference in these new national employment agencies. It is true that in a few of the larger agencies—I believe only about fourteen or fifteen—provision has been made whereby the Department of Pensions and National Health may install an official known as a veterans' welfare officer. This official sits in the national employment agency, but he cannot do any actual placement work. In other words, if a returned soldier goes to the agency looking for a job, the veterans' welfare officer cannot accept him as a special case, and go out and find the work. For some reason or another the Department of Labour will not allow the official of the Department of Pensions and National Health to do that.

The same point was under discussion before the special committee on the Pension Act which met last year. I would refer hon. members to page 672 of the proceedings of that committee, at which point I asked Mr. Woods certain questions. Mr. Woods was in charge of the veterans' welfare division of the Department of Pensions and National Health. These are the questions and answers:

Q. If an employer sends in for five men under the new plan that request will go to the general employment officers?

A. Yes.

Q. And there will be no preference for the ex-service man; he just takes his chance with everybody else who is registered there?

A. Unless the employer registers a preference.

Q. In most cases probably the employer will not. In other words, you are trying to put the onus on the employer to ask for the soldier. Suppose he does not. Then the returned man will just be treated as another individual, and your welfare officer sitting in that same office will not have the power to go out and seek jobs for the returned men.

A. No, not under the new set-up of the dominion employment service.

That means, to sum up, that no preference is given in our dominion employment offices to the men of the fighting forces; and that, in my opinion, is wrong, and should be remedied without further delay.

This committee brought in recommendations, and the Minister of Labour will find at page 503 of the *Votes and Proceedings* for last session a recommendation as follows:

We recommend that the Department of Labour instruct and require their placement or employment officers to cooperate with the veterans' welfare division officers and to give preference in employment to ex-service men.

Furthermore, the Department of Pensions and National Health has set up honorary com-

mittees across Canada, and has asked those committees to try to find ways of placing these men of the fighting forces. The inference has been throughout that the work of the honorary committees was to persuade employers to give preference to returned men. I believe the Minister of Pensions and National Health will agree with me when I say that.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): That is correct.

Mr. GREEN: We have such a committee in Vancouver, and there are similar committees in other parts of the country. They have run up against this very problem. I quote from a report made last December by a sub-committee of these citizens. I might add that Mr. Woods was present at the meeting. I might state, further, that I do not believe there is a more efficient or more progressive man in the civil service than Mr. Walter S. Woods. We find this statement in the report of the committee of citizens:

It has been generally recognized by this committee that where possible veterans should receive preference in all employment openings. We think that a definite policy should be laid down by the Department of Labour in this question and that staffs should be instructed accordingly.

That is not the condition at the present time.

Then this committee go on to explain the reasons for their recommendation. I quote again from the report, for the information of the Minister of Labour:

We are always aware of the psychological effect on the veteran when registering for employment. He feels, and always will feel, that he is entitled to just a little more consideration than is given to those who did not serve in the active forces. So, if we can give him some direct service, we will go a long way toward dispelling the ever present fear that he is going to be the "forgotten man". Therefore we feel that some authority should be instituted right in the unemployment office to see that the veteran gets his fair share and percentage of employment.

That means, in effect, that the government is not backing up these men of the fighting forces who go to the national employment agencies seeking work.

The Minister of Labour is a new man on the job and I believe he is a very able administrator. I urge upon him most sincerely that he remedy this situation at once; that he direct his employment offices right across Canada to give preference to the men of the fighting forces. Further, where there is a representative of the Department of Pensions and National Health in an employment office, the Minister of Labour should direct that such man from the other department shall have the utmost freedom in going out to find jobs and in acting as a placement officer.