

upon the minister. I am not going to discuss the point he raised. I suggest that this bill is just a measure—

Mr. ROWE: Just a gesture.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No; it is perhaps more than a gesture. It is in fulfilment of a pledge given in June last when the order in council was passed. I believe the order in council was passed because of the pressure of public opinion upon the government to do something more than had been done. I believe it was very distressing in the early days of the war, when men were sent back, and especially those who had been overseas, because of physical disabilities. They were given what? They were given a month's pay and allowances.

One of the real difficulties the minister is going to find under the bill—and I point it out to him now so that the government may have an opportunity to think about it—one of the real difficulties to be encountered in operating under this bill is the case of the civilian who had a job before he enlisted, who went overseas and who, by reason of climatic conditions or for some other reason, is not able to come back and fulfil the functions he performed prior to his enlistment. How many of them there are, I do not know. How many there may be, I cannot guess. But that is going to present a real problem to the government. If the returned man cannot perform the functions he performed prior to his enlistment, then that is a cause for rejecting him under one of the sections of this bill.

Those are problem cases. I am sure the Minister of Pensions and National Health realizes what the situation is. I hope the Minister of Labour will understand it, too. Those are going to be the difficult cases to deal with. The man who is competent, the man who can come back to his lathe or to his job—there will be no difficulties about him. The real difficulty comes from the man who wants to work, but cannot work.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Problem cases.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): You may call them problem cases, or whatever you like, but you may rest assured that there will be a great many of them, even though these men have not been through the rigours of battle. They have to be taken care of. What is the government offering them? It is offering nothing under this bill.

There are a number of aspects with which one might deal in discussing the bill. I believe the biggest problem of all is the man who enlisted, and who at the time of his enlistment did not have a job. He will come back, and unless there is something more than this bill offers, he will still be without a job.

Mr. CLARENCE GILLIS (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I had intended reserving what I have to say for the committee stage, had it not been for the remarks of the hon. member for Parry Sound (Mr. Slaght). I think they were misleading. In his remarks, when addressing the jury, he makes the observation that this bill was endorsed by the Canadian Legion, and that it was endorsed by labour. Definitely and specifically he made that statement.

At the time he made it I was sceptical. I am a member of the Canadian Legion. I understand the machinery of that organization, and I have had considerable correspondence with it, in that section of the country from which I come. I am reasonably sure that there has never been a branch of that organization consulted as to whether they disapprove or approve this bill. In addition, there is only one democratic way of consulting labour, and that is through the medium of their organization. I do not believe any of the organized sections of the trade union movement in Canada have been consulted.

I do not think this bill is necessary, and in that respect I agree with the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson).

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): It ought not to be necessary.

Mr. GILLIS: It is not necessary at this time, in the form in which it is presented to the house. The men we should be concerned about, as the leader of the opposition and others have pointed out, are those in that disinherited generation which rode the rods for twenty years prior to the outbreak of the war, the men who were the first to go into uniform. To date no provision has been made for them, except to relegate them back to the ranks of the unemployed whence they came.

The man who had a job when he enlisted will not have difficulty, upon discharge, in securing the employment he left. The order in council passed at the last session served the purpose in that connection. I have seen no difficulty, as far as they are concerned, in the different parts of Canada in which I have moved. But there are hundreds of men who did not have jobs and who are back with discharge certificates. The employers do not want them because they are not physically fit. They are told their discharge is not worth the paper it is written on.

The Department of Pensions and National Health is trying to do something, and it is my personal opinion that it is a mistake to shift the problem of rehabilitation from that department to the Department of Labour.

An hon. MEMBER: Why?