

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I understand there is reference to that in the report laid on the table. Before that report was made I personally took steps to discuss this question with the three service ministers and to study reconditioning from two angles—in the first place, reconditioning of the men rejected on account of unfitness. That is an important point.

Mr. GREEN: Is that done now?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): It is being considered now by an interdepartmental committee.

Mr. GREEN: But no such reconditioning is done now?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Not as far as this department is concerned. I cannot speak for the defence services. Of course, there is reconditioning after discharge, of those who could not be considered as fit to rejoin but must be reestablished in civil life and industry.

Mr. GREEN: I think there has been a tendency in the defence services to get rid of a man once he is not A-1, and the time has now come when that policy can be no longer followed. We must make more use of these men, even though they are not in the first category.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I cannot speak for the policy followed by the services but I am inclined to agree with my hon. friend that as the demands of the war grow more intense we may have to relax some of these stringent rules. In the meantime I have sent the hon. member for Mackenzie an excellent article on social security in New Zealand.

Mrs. CASSELMAN: I would urge that the individual be considered wherever it is possible along the lines just now mentioned, and also that the women and children receive special consideration at times when their cases are exceptional. I believe the women need right now, perhaps more than they ever did, the comfort and encouragement which would come from knowing that the individual is not lost in the mass. Many cases have been brought to my attention already, although I am very new at this; perhaps these people think I might be able to do something just because I am new, or perhaps they are giving me the old cases that have resisted for some time, thinking that a new person might do something with them. But there is probably a tendency to allow no exceptions to the rules. I know we must have rules, but some-

times exceptional circumstances do arise, and circumstances alter cases. I urge that the individual case receive consideration, and in some cases perhaps even favourable consideration.

May I also say how very grateful I am for the warm reception and welcome given to me by the house. I have been welcomed by hon. members on both sides of the house, and I should like to thank them. I should also like to thank hon. members for the regard they have expressed to me for my husband. I feel that I am undertaking this responsibility with his full knowledge and approval. I cannot, however, speak much of that. I should like to think of myself as in no sense an ornament to this house but rather as a useful working member with sufficient elasticity to follow the principle of give and take.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): May I be permitted to congratulate the hon. member (Mrs. Casselman) upon the fact that her maiden speech in this house was made for such a splendid humanitarian cause as that to which she referred, the cause of widows and children and those who are confronted with some of the hard conditions of life. I am sure that her contribution to the discussions and decisions of this house in the years to come will be very valuable. May I assure her that this year the power of discretion under the pensions act has been broadened more than ever before, and that in some of the regulations of the department there is a wide power of discretion. So long as I am in charge of the department I shall endeavour to administer these regulations with all the humanity and sympathy possible.

Item agreed to.

215. Health branch. Health branch administration, \$49,570.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I have here publication No. 21 of the Department of Pensions and National Health dealing with the question of housing. I should like to draw the attention of the committee to a couple of important sentences:

Dark, gloomy, insanitary hovels, which submerge the thoughts of their inmates to the level of the beast are not conducive to health or later to good citizenship; moreover, under such conditions sickness and poverty occupy so much energy and thought as to preclude much effort for better things.

The development of good citizens in a country like Canada is of the greatest importance, since the future of the nation depends on the physical, mental and moral health of the young people. Good housing therefore becomes an important means towards that end.

I should like to commend this department for concerning itself with this very important