

P.C. 3359, of November 10, bringing merchant seamen and salt water fishermen under the Pension Act with respect to death or disability caused by enemy action or counter-action.

May I say in passing that I am not at this time tabling these two orders in council nor some others to which I shall refer, because they have been superseded by other and improved measures. When the committee deals with concrete legislation, however, all these documents showing the progressive history of a proposed measure will be made available in convenient form.

1940

One of the most notable events in 1940 in the matter of planning for post-war emergencies was the introduction and adoption of the Unemployment Insurance Act, Chapter 44, a copy of which is before you on Appendix 1 at page 157.

It was considered that the period of high employment upon which the country was then entering afforded a timely occasion for introducing this legislation and insuring the stability of the fund. It was realized that with the end of the war many thousands of industrial workers would inevitably face a period of interrupted employment. The payment of unemployment benefits during the transition period upon which we have now actually entered was calculated to help maintain purchasing power and provide an economy in which demobilized members of the forces would find employment opportunity.

While it is true that the Act as originally adopted did not provide unemployment insurance benefits for discharged members of the forces the means for doing this were already under consideration and, as will later be indicated, the Act is today playing an important part in rehabilitation policy.

Pursuant to the authority given to the Cabinet Committee on Demobilization and Re-establishment, that committee, early in 1940, began the organization of a General Advisory Committee of government officials under the chairmanship of the late Brigadier General H. F. McDonald, chairman of the Canadian Pension Commission.

The General Advisory Committee held its first meeting on January 19th, 1940, and arranged for the formation of 10 subcommittees to deal with the following subjects:—

1. The re-education and re-training of casualties whose disablement precludes them from resumption of their pre-war employment.
2. Policy with regard to post-discharge pay or gratuity.
3. The policy regarding utilization or extension of existing machinery to assist in the reinstatement of discharged soldiers in employment.
4. The consideration of the desirability of establishing a form of industrial training for those younger men who by reason of pre-war economic conditions are lacking in that respect.
5. The consideration of the desirability of providing facilities for the continuation of interrupted secondary education or professional training.
6. The question of the inauguration of a program of public works and the utilization of discharged personnel on such work.
7. The question of assistance to industrial enterprise.
8. The consideration of policies of housing and municipal assistance.
9. The administration of surplus canteen or other funds available at the close of the war for the future benefit of discharged men.
10. The policy of agricultural settlement.

As the General Advisory Committee proceeded with its work it was found desirable that its status should be clarified by a further order in council