

*Forces—Reinstatement in Employment*

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): We agree with that.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): This afternoon the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Roebuck) made a speech which unfortunately I did not hear in whole, but which dealt in a measure with the larger aspects of this question of rehabilitation. With a great deal of what the hon. gentleman said I am in agreement. It may interest him to know, however, in relation to his remarks about the Atlantic charter, it is the opinion of many persons, including one man who was in very high authority on the other side but who has recently ceased to hold office, that there will be as many interpretations of the Atlantic charter as there are bodies sitting in at the conference. That did not sound very good to me.

Mr. ROEBUCK: That is the case also in connection with the bible.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I suppose that is true, and as long as we are individualists and think for ourselves, that is quite proper. But it is not all going to be as easy as some people seem to imagine.

Coming back to this bill, I do not intend to deal with the whole question of rehabilitation in the post-war period. That, Mr. Speaker, is a mighty problem, and it is going to take the best minds and brains of the nationals not only of this country but of every democratic country in the world to solve these problems. But I do reaffirm what I said not many days ago in this house, that if industry and labour and governmental authority are wise; if they survey the situation sufficiently in advance, and if they make proper plans, there need not be a recurrence of the conditions we experienced after the last war. Therefore, as citizens of this country, as men earnestly wanting to do the right thing by our fellow citizens, it behooves us to begin to study these questions now. It is not too soon to talk about them; it is not too soon to study them. I commend the suggestion that was made in this house to-day, I think by the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Douglas), who I thought hardly deserved all the condemnation that was heaped upon him by my hon. and learned friend the member for Parry Sound (Mr. Slight) with respect to his observations on this bill. It is not too soon for this parliament to set up a committee of this house to begin now to study and explore what may be done for rehabilitation in this country, especially of the armed forces. Begin now. Let the Minister of Labour give us a lead and give the private members of this house an opportunity to show what is in

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

them. There will be ideas come forward, in a body of 245 men like this. I never had any difficulty in solving problems if I had ideas. The trouble with most of us is paucity of ideas. I have never in my life had any difficulty in clothing my ideas with proper language. My weakness has always been that I never had the right ideas, or enough of them, and I think that is the case with most of us. Originality is almost wanting in most of us, but let us get down to business and begin now to study the question of rehabilitation.

This bill will do something to take care of the soldier who had a job before he went to war and who comes back disabled. There are many soldiers in the armed forces. I shall not impugn their patriotism, but I suggest that at least fifty per cent of the men who enlisted in New Brunswick in the early stages of the war did so because they had no jobs. I have talked to many of them. I have had boys come into my office and ask me what they should do. They have had it figured out on a slip of paper, how much they were going to get out of it. I have always tried to tell them it was not a question of dollars and cents, that it was a question of their conscience, the duty they owed to their country, and that the mere pittance the country paid them was not the real consideration at all.

Mr. MAYHEW: Does my hon. friend think that was the spirit shown at Dunkirk?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No; that was not the spirit shown at Dunkirk, and that would not be the spirit of these young men after they got into the army and saw some action. They would be just as patriotic as anyone else; but there is no doubt that numbers of men went from this country—let us be honest about it—because they were unemployed. That applies principally to the communities where there was no war employment. I do not know about the central provinces, where there was a great deal of war employment, but undoubtedly that was true in certain parts of the country. But do not let that be considered as a reflection on the patriotism of those young men who enlisted. That was not the sole motive; but they knew they would receive certain considerations, that their families would be looked after, and they joined up. That is nothing at all against them; but those men do not come under this statute. It is admitted; the minister will, of course, agree with that. That is the problem I suggest he has to face in the future. What about the reestablishment of the men who did not have jobs when they enlisted? That is the feature which I believe the hon. member for Weyburn was trying to impress