

the deepest concern to them and that parliament is anxious to make the fullest provision for all matters that are likely to arise which may have a bearing upon their interests through the period that is to follow at the conclusion of this terrible war.

My colleague the Minister of Pensions and National Health has, as hon. gentlemen know, had more to do than any other member of the government with the administration of veterans' affairs during the last few years. He himself some time ago proposed the establishment of a department of veterans' affairs, and has had much to do with the preparation of the bill which is to be based on this resolution. I would ask the committee if before beginning to discuss the resolution at any length they would permit my colleague to make a statement on the resolution which will, I am sure, help to clarify discussion.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Chairman, following the remarks of my right hon. leader, I believe it will be recalled that when we had a select committee of this house studying the question of land settlement in 1942, in giving evidence on June 30 of that year I suggested that it might be appropriate to set up in Canada a department of soldiers' or veterans' affairs. That suggestion received, I think, universal commendation, not only from veterans' organizations across Canada but from every political party represented in this house. It is not necessary at this stage to enter upon any prolonged discussion of the adequacy or inadequacy of the preparations made for the rehabilitation of those who are at present serving Canada in the various armed forces. There will, of course, be other occasions when ample opportunity will be given for such discussion. This resolution is merely to set up a new ministry, and possibly it might be of interest to recall for a moment or two the various changes that were made by parliament in regard to meeting the problems of the last war and of this war.

Early in 1918 we had formed in Canada the Department of Soldiers' Civil Reestablishment, with two branches, the first known as the invalided soldiers' commission and dealing with hospitals, sanatoria and other services, and the second continuing the board of pension commissions already in existence, and reporting to the privy council through the Minister of Soldiers' Civil Reestablishment.

After the war, as hon. members are aware, the hospitals which were under the control of members of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps became civilian hospitals, and in 1920 this parliament gave statutory authority to pension regulations which were passed during the

great war. At the same time in 1920 pensions arising out of the Northwest rebellion and the South African war were brought into line, as regards the scale, with the great war pensions, and questions in regard to pensions for militia men in training were adjusted in this house in 1921.

The Department of Soldiers' Civil Reestablishment was responsible for many services in connection with the placement of discharged men in civil life with one definite exception, that of land settlement, which was placed under the Minister of the Interior. The measure to be based upon this resolution will place both the Veterans' Land Act and the other soldier settlement system under the Department of Veterans' Affairs. That was one of the recommendations, hon. gentlemen will recall, that was made to this house by the same select committee which studied the question of land settlement and which was responsible for the amendments to the Veterans' Land Act adopted by the house at that time.

Mr. GRAYDON: The present Department of Pensions and National Health passes out of existence with the setting up of these two new departments?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Consequent upon the passing of this measure, part I of the act of 1928 setting up the Department of Pensions and National Health will be repealed. Part I of that act deals with soldiers' affairs, hospitals, pensions, treatment, rehabilitation and the like. That part of the act will be repealed and the new measure based upon this resolution will be substituted therefor.

Mr. GRAYDON: Why was the word "pensions" left out of the wording of this resolution? That was one of the reasons why I asked my question.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): That is something I was not really aware of. The resolution was carefully considered and the measure will certainly deal with all aspects of pensions and all aspects of treatment and of rehabilitation. The changes are more necessary now than ever because of the expansion of hospital work during the present war and the development of pensions. Already the number of pensions is becoming substantially large. It is due also to the scope and the sweep of rehabilitation measures which this house has dealt with from time to time, mostly in select committees.

Mr. GRAYDON: I am sorry to interrupt, but the minister's answer to my question with respect to the passing out of existence of the present Department of Pensions and National