

Mr. RALSTON: What does my hon. friend suggest that the department should do? Keep them on?

Mr. GREEN: Now may I continue? Practically no plans have been made to aid those men in the convalescent stage. Convalescent homes should be set up in Canada, and the men should be nursed back to health instead of being thrown out on their ear. The medical examination when they were enlisted was far more severe and thorough than the examination in the last war, yet thousands of men are found unfit and simply thrown out. I know no more effective method of making communists than by treating in this way men who have enlisted for active service. Since Christmas I have had about a dozen men come to my office all of whom were treated in that way.

As a rule I do not believe in going into individual cases in the house, but there is one in Vancouver which illustrates the point so clearly that I will give both ministers the name and number so that they can check up and reply. It is the case of Private A. A. Stewart, of the army service corps, No. K 79092. This man was an imperial in the last war. He enlisted in the non-permanent active militia and went to camp with them in May 1940. In June he enlisted in the active service force. In August while on leave in Vancouver from Esquimalt he took sick, was put in the small hospital at Seaforth armouries, and then sent to Shaughnessy military hospital. There it was found he had a bad kidney which would have to be removed. He was kept in Shaughnessy hospital three months while letters passed and attempts were made to get instructions from a department at Ottawa, presumably the Department of National Defence, as to what should be done—whether or not they could remove the infected kidney in that hospital. Finally word came through that he was to be discharged from the army. The doctors in Shaughnessy hospital felt so badly about the case that they arranged for the man to be taken into the general hospital in Vancouver and given his operation.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): It was arranged from here.

Mr. GREEN: At any rate even the departmental doctors in Vancouver were greatly exercised about the case. The man was turned out of Shaughnessy hospital in that condition on November 2, as a walking case. Fortunately he was able to get a lift down to the general hospital, where he was put in the relief ward with orientals and people on relief although he was in the uniform of the

[Mr. Green.]

Canadian active service force. Two days later he was discharged from the Canadian army, and of course the general hospital authorities had to take care of that operation. When he was discharged the allowances to his wife and children were cut off.

This sort of thing must be stopped. As I have said, in my opinion the Minister of National Defence personally is not to blame; I know he is just as sympathetic as any of the rest of us. But apparently there is a policy in the medical services at headquarters here that is entirely too hardhearted and unreasonable under existing conditions. Provision should be made so that these men who have been willing to offer their lives could be nursed back to health so far as that may be possible, by some government department. Every man who is discharged as medically unfit should be transferred to the Department of Pensions and National Health; his pay and all his allowances should be continued until he has received treatment and has had a chance to recover, or until his claim for pension has been ruled upon by the pension commission, which I understand takes at least six weeks and, in many instances much longer.

Mr. HOWDEN: How long was this man in the army?

Mr. GREEN: This man enlisted in the active service force in June. There is another feature to the question. When a man who has been discharged as medically unfit tries to get a job, his prospective employer asks, "Why were you discharged from the army?" The answer is, "I was medically unfit"; and the result is that this man simply cannot get work. The whole question of the treatment of these discharged men should be looked into by the government immediately, and steps should be taken to see that they are dealt with fairly.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): The hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Green) referred to a particular case. I think in fairness he might have concluded the record of that case, which is that as soon as the matter was brought to my personal attention I took it up with the medical services, and it was adjusted immediately on the basis of fairness and equity.

Someone has referred to the number of discharges. I should like to give the figures, and I hope the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston) will forgive me for having obtained this information from his department.

Out of a total of 18,109 discharges, 7,244 have served for less than ninety days and 14,147 have served for less than six months.