

were many shortcomings. If I can gather from what I have heard expressed in this committee, it is the intention that in the future there will be no more penny-pinching in the administration of veterans affairs. It is our idea that the returned man should always have the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. MacNICOL: He never gets it.

Mr. BROOKS: We should see that no injustices are perpetrated in the name of these rigid and hide-bound regulations which in the past have so often defeated the real spirit of veterans' legislation.

As I said, we shall discuss this bill section by section. Along with the minister I feel that there will be very little with which hon. members will find fault. If it is administered as it should be; if every effort is made to see that our men obtain housing in this country; if every effort is made to see that they receive proper employment, and if some of the other abuses which are perhaps outside the minister's department are attended to, then I am satisfied that this measure will be a very great help to our returned men.

Mr. CLARENCE GILLIS (Cape Breton South): I have no intention of making a speech at this time; I merely wish to say that as a member of the committee I agree with most of what the last speaker had to say. The committee worked in harmony. The decision that brought about this bill was unanimous. Nevertheless I wish to place this group on record by saying that while we approve the grants as set out in this bill, we desire to emphasize that it will not in any way replace useful employment, which is still our major responsibility. It is still our major responsibility to returning personnel to see that we do not get into the frame of mind of thinking that when we relieve their immediate circumstances on their coming out of the service by grants of this kind, the job is complete.

I should also like to say a word with respect to the discharged service personnel who are coming out with a misconduct discharge. The test of this particular bill will be its application. We approve the board of review set up to examine all discharges for misconduct and the board of review which is dealing directly with gratuity applications as to whether they will be granted or otherwise. Up to the present time the personnel of the boards are in every way, so far as we can determine, suitable and sympathetic; but we must bear in mind that the personnel of these boards are open to change from time to time. The present wording of the act puts wide administrative powers in the hands of these

[Mr. Brooks.]

boards. I say that because I think the veterans affairs committee under the present minister, and a capable chairman, has an obligation. We shall be here for the next four or five years. We wish closely to follow the administration of this particular section of the bill to see that every last service man or woman affected by a misconduct discharge gets a proper examination and that the board makes what in our judgment is a decision in accordance with the interpretation or opinion of the members when this particular bill was drafted.

When the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Brooks) spoke about penny-pinching I took my mind back to the time when a gun was placed at the head of pensioners and civil servants in this country forcing them to give up either their job or their pension. I hope we never get back to that kind of administration. The members of this group are supporting the bill. We think the committee did a fair job in the time at its disposal. The subject-matter covered by this bill is a controversial one, and we could have been many months at it. In the time at its disposal the committee did a first-class job, and we shall watch the administration of the measure very carefully.

I just wish to leave one thought with the minister with reference to service personnel discharged with a misconduct discharge. I know this does not come within the purview of the department. The dependents of those particular people have had no pay and allowances for months and months. I discussed this matter with the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Abbott). I hope I am going to get an answer some time. Christmas is coming on. The husband is incarcerated and there has been no allowance for months. Therefore it will not be a very bright Christmas for such people. I suggest that the minister might use his persuasive powers with National Defence to see if they cannot loosen up and do something.

Mr. Speaker, I just wish to place the members of this group on record as being cognizant of the implications of the bill and to say that we shall watch its administration very closely.

Mr. J. A. MARSHALL (Camrose): Representing as I do the Social Credit group, I wish to say on their behalf that we are thoroughly in accord with this bill. What I might say at this time would be repetitious, because I heartily agree with the sentiments expressed by the two previous speakers. In committee we raised objections to certain sections of the act, sections 4, 11 and 12. We shall be content to allow the bill to go