

from the war itself, which has ever faced this country. By the end of this year there will be close to three-quarters of a million men in the fighting services. The number engaged in munitions factories and other war industries is probably close to three-quarters of a million. So we shall have anywhere from one and a quarter to one and a half million men thrown on the labour market following the "cease fire". That is going to create a problem which will tax all the capacities of this country, and we cannot afford to blunder along and wait until it is upon us.

There are a great many things to be done. Development of the St. Lawrence waterway has already been mentioned. This country from one end to the other is crying out for the building of houses; in practically every city there is a housing shortage. In this province of Ontario, according to a statement made the other day by the Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe), there is a power shortage—this, in a country which has more potential hydro-electric power than any other nation in the world. That ought not to be. Plans should be laid for a tremendous electrification programme with the coming of peace.

Schemes should be worked out without delay to provide, I would say, three things:

First, to accept complete responsibility for these men from the time they are discharged.

Second, to accept responsibility for training those who want to be trained.

Third, to get these men placed as quickly as possible either in private industry or in some government projects.

Personally I believe it will be necessary, following the war, to institute a great programme of public works to absorb the employment slack until industry can be reorganized to take care of it. I trust that the government will not content itself with the odd little bits of legislation such as the bill now before us, but that it will give the house the entire scheme which it has in mind; that it will take some steps to set up a committee of this house before which various bodies in this country such as the Canadian Legion, representatives of labour, agriculture and industry can attend—a committee that will advance their plans and lay their schemes against the time when the problems of rehabilitation and reestablishment will be even more gigantic than they are to-day.

Mr. G. S. WHITE (Hastings-Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make only a very few and general remarks on this bill.

As far as the principle of the bill is concerned, I am sure that all hon. members, irrespective of party, and whether or not they

[Mr. T. C. Douglas.]

are returned soldiers, will approve what we are trying to do for the soldiers now in the armed forces, because I know that every hon. gentleman is only too anxious to help in their reestablishment and rehabilitation.

I concur in many of the remarks made by the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Douglas) as to both the advantages and the disadvantages of the proposed legislation. The one thing which I did not quite agree with, or did not quite understand, was what he said about being afraid of the lawyers—perhaps because he is a parson, or for some other unexplained reason.

The bill as presented is very broad in its application, but, as has already been pointed out, it will cover only a limited number of the men now serving in the armed forces. Large numbers of them have already been discharged, and because of the time limit in the bill they will be excluded. It also fails to provide for those who have enlisted just after leaving school or college, or who have left farms and have been employed in various industries which have been closed because of the war. Other categories are not provided for, including those who had no employment when they enlisted.

A feature of the bill which strikes me as most important is the various exemptions which it allows. While it is not clear what procedure is to be followed, no doubt it will be by way of hearings before a magistrate or a judge, which leaves these particular sections open to many and different interpretations. As was pointed out by the hon. member for Weyburn, the provisions are so broad that unless they are greatly restricted, either in the bill itself or under the regulations, many men who are only too anxious to do their bit will be deprived of the very benefits which the minister and the house are anxious to confer upon them.

The subject of rehabilitation has been raised in connection with that of reestablishment. I believe all hon. members will agree that the two must go hand in hand. While some steps may have been taken in the matter of rehabilitation, they fall far short of what we should do. At the present time a soldier receives, upon discharge, in addition to a small clothing allowance, one month's pay and allowances. If he is unmarried it amounts to about thirty-nine or forty dollars. Surely the very least that any soldier is entitled to in this connection is six months' pay. Hon. members can easily recall cases in the present war of soldiers who, upon return from overseas, have been discharged and received a small rehabilitation grant and have been unable within the one-month period to reestablish themselves. Many of those boys have had to