

ernment's duty to consider the problems affecting the one million veterans of Canada. Happily, not all of them require assistance, nor do all especially need to appeal to the Government.

I am confident that the Government will always ensure that Canada's pension legislation is kept in harmony with modern concepts of social justice and its obligations to those who, in war and in peace, have placed their lives at the service of their country.

**Mr. J. Chester MacRae (York-Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I have followed with interest several very able addresses on this vital subject. The matter of veterans affairs is one that should never involve political partisanship. The welfare of those men and women who served their country in time of war, and of their dependents, is too important for it ever to become so petty as to involve political partisanship. I was glad to see that those who addressed the House refrained from that.

• (4:20 p.m.)

The mover of the motion, the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) is a man for whom we in our party have a very special affection. Others in the House have spoken about the technical side of what has happened; I should like in the few minutes at my disposal, and I promise not to be too long, Mr. Speaker, to address myself to the human factor. The hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe served in the last war as a private soldier. He went to France on D-day, June 6, 1944, perhaps as the only man in the Canadian army with the rank of provisional officer cadet. He was waiting for his turn to go to OCTU, for his officer's commission. The colonel of the regiment, with which I was also serving, invited him to go along, and so the hon. gentleman took part in the greatest military operation in the history of the world as an officer cadet.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacRae:** He later ended up with the rank of full colonel and was in charge of the entire reserve forces in the province of Newfoundland when he retired to come to Parliament. I felt he gave a very masterful address.

I must say, too, although perhaps some of my colleagues will not agree with me, that the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis), who served as the chairman of our committee during the past year, also gave an impressive address. Our relationship has been a very happy one. My major interest in public life has always been veterans affairs and I found that during this past year especially we have worked very well. There was very little, if any, partisanship in the committee. There were some points with which we did not completely agree in the deliberations of the committee, yet the report we brought down was an unanimous one. I think the report was a good one, too.

Although the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is not a veteran, I know he has a very deep interest in the veterans of this country. He has

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expressed that on many occasions. Although I disagree with his socialist theories, being a right wing Conservative, I appreciate his deep concern for the welfare of his fellow Canadians.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacRae:** The hon. gentleman from Fort William (Mr. Badanai), who has been a friend of mine since he came to this House in 1958, also addressed the House very well, I felt. I can well remember what his predecessor, the Reverend Dan McIvor, said to me in 1957 after I had made my maiden speech in the House of Commons. I was speaking on veterans affairs, and on the estimates of the minister of that day, the beloved Colonel Alfred J. Brooks, who later became Senator Brooks and leader of our party in the Senate. After I had spoken, Mr. McIvor came over. He crossed the floor of the House and congratulated me and he gave me a piece of advice that I have remembered ever since. He said, "Don't try to be an expert in too many fields; there is too much going on here. Take up two or three subjects and try to know as much as possible about them." I never forgot that. He was a very fine gentleman, as is the hon. member for Fort William.

I should like to say this: it is now 52 years since the end of World War I and 25 years since the end of World War II. Those years have gone by very quickly. Of the more than 1.5 million men who served in Canada's wars, about 961,000 are still living. They are 961,000 very, very important men and very important women. May I recount an incident that took place in the last war. As hon. members know, a hospital has been built at Ste Anne de Bellevue. I had occasion to visit Ste Anne de Bellevue in 1941. My brother was dying there at the time. He had enlisted in the Regiment de Maisonneuve, a French Canadian regiment. There were men who had been there since 1914 and even 1918. Many of them were undergoing psychiatric treatment, because these men had been shellshocked. In the Second World War they called that condition battle exhaustion, although I think shellshock describes it better. What struck me was this: when they passed me in the corridor in my officer's uniform, they recognized the officer's rank and snapped to attention and saluted. That moved me deeply. These men were living in the past, in those days when their minds had been destroyed by the shell fire and yet they recognized an officer.

Previous speakers in this debate have referred to the work done by the chairman of the committee. Other speakers have alluded to the report of the Woods committee which I think, Mr. Speaker, is the most important document on veterans affairs that has ever been produced. It refers to veterans problems—perhaps problems is not the right word. It refers to the situation of veterans in this nation. I know Mr. Justice Woods personally and I served with him on the national command of the Canadian Legion. That report was a masterful document. As other speakers have said, the white paper followed the tabling of that report. Submissions were put forward by many of the great veterans organizations in this country.