

*Forces—Reinstatement in Employment*

enlisting, so that it entirely overlooks the very large number of men who unfortunately, and possibly only temporarily, were without jobs at the time they entered his majesty's service.

Second, it assures to those who did hold jobs at the time of enlistment no better jobs than they had when they went away, irrespective of how poorly they were paid at that time and irrespective of changing conditions; with this exception only, that it does respect the seniority rights of those who enlisted, if such rights of seniority ever existed—and of course they exist in only a few cases.

A third insufficiency of this bill is that it does not make provision—and of course it could not do so—for those whose jobs will no longer exist by the time they return from war, and that may well be so in a very large number of instances, in the rapidly changing economic and social conditions of to-day.

The bill is little more than a gesture; on the other hand it is a good gesture; it is in the right direction, and it shows that the new Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) at least realizes the existence of the problem which Canada at some time must confront, that is to say, the return and demobilization of a large number of men.

The realization of the general problem, which is more interesting perhaps than the bill itself, is to be found in the preamble. The first words which I wish to quote are as follows:

... a great national problem will be presented when the members of those forces complete their service and are to be returned to civil employment.

And the next words, at the bottom of the paragraph:

... it is deemed expedient for the security, defence, peace, order and welfare of Canada that provision should be made for the orderly reinstatement in their previous employment of such persons aforesaid;

Now, if it is expedient that men should be returned to employment who had employment previously, surely the expediency is not confined to those persons only. It is expedient—most expedient—that all men on discharge from the armed forces of Canada be given employment. The importance is attached to employment for all, not merely to reinstatement for some.

The government evidently has realized one aspect of the problem, and I suggest that surely the government also recognizes the other horn of the dilemma.

Nor is that expediency to which I have referred limited to those leaving the armed forces. I am sometimes appalled at the thought of what will occur when we demobilize the army of Canada and perhaps half a million

men are thrown suddenly on the labour market, to join some seven hundred thousand men and women discharged from the munitions factories. So, Mr. Speaker, you have a picture of possibly 1,200,000 soldiers of Canada, workers if you like, those in uniform and those in overalls, all contributing at present to Canada's war effort, suddenly discharged upon the streets to be enlisted in the army of the unemployed. That is the picture which, I submit to this house, may well appal the boldest who looks forward—something at which the stoutest heart may quail, as we look into the future and contemplate what may happen and what will happen if nothing is done to prevent it.

It is the duty of this parliament to study diligently that problem and to see to it, if it is within our power to do so, that no such post-war catastrophe shall occur in this country. That study should commence right here and now. It is a high task to which we are called: We are not alone in being called to that task. We are not alone in the concern which I am expressing and which all hon. members must feel, nor are we alone in the vision which some people at least are catching, not of the disaster which is ahead of us if we are so foolish as to allow it to overtake us, but rather the vision of a new order and a better world which we can create if we have the wisdom to do so.

These thoughts are stirring everywhere. It may be that some other hon. members do not meet the evidences of this thought—though perhaps I am in no special position—as much as I do. I say "perhaps" because I see welling up around me on every side discouragement and discontent and the desire to meet in some way the problem which everyone feels is coming upon us.

May I call attention to one of the greatest documents of modern history; I refer to the Atlantic declaration. It has been referred to as the modern magna charta of human freedom, and perhaps the description was justified. It was promulgated by the two great leaders of democracy, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the President of the United States. It was approved by the self-governing dominions and by Russia. It was described by the Prime Minister of Great Britain as "a rough and ready goal towards which the democracies are marching."

I pass over the political clauses of the declaration, although they are of historic import, and I call the attention of the house to paragraphs 4, 5 and 6, because they embody the economic declarations of the charter and apply in general principle, or are of interest in a