

in this country who are prematurely aged, who are not suffering from a disability admitted to be a disability due to the war at all. These men are incapable of earning a livelihood, and I say that this government might well to-day adopt the principle suggested, and give to these men a pension at the age of sixty-five. I make the suggestion now that the time has arrived when a survey of the conditions in this respect should be made and a provision introduced into the bill that will take care of this situation, which is becoming a very serious one indeed.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I think my hon. friend's remarks would be proper under certain conditions. But he is interjecting into the old age pensions bill, which was never intended to cover such cases, matters relating to the pension act and legislation pertaining to the returned soldier. Other legislation has been enacted to meet such cases. If that legislation requires amendment to meet the situation my hon. friend speaks of, and I think in some respects it does, let us deal with it when we come to it and not involve such matters in a bill of this kind. That was stated two sessions ago, and I think last year, and generally accepted, and it would be a great mistake to deal with the soldier problem under such an enactment as is proposed here. Undoubtedly there is developing in Canada a problem in regard to returned soldiers, the cases of men who are becoming prematurely old on account of their services. That will be a problem this parliament will have to consider, but I do not think it should be thrust into such a discussion as we have had to-night.

As regards a survey of the situation, surveys are being made from time to time. There are various veterans' organizations throughout Canada that meet annually and many of them are making suggestions as to their conditions and requirements. Those are being presented to the Department of Soldiers' Reestablishment and by that department, or by the government, are being brought to the attention of parliament. But I think it would be a mistake to inject into a bill of this character, matters which should be to some extent provided for by special legislation.

Mr. MANION: I do not think the Minister of Health is correct in suggesting that there would be an injustice to anybody if we injected, as he termed it, this matter into the old age pensions bill.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Not injustice.

Mr. MANION: Then if there is no injustice I do not see where there should be any objection to it. I do not see why we should not inject it into this bill as we have already done in the case of the Civil Service Act. In that act we give a preference to the returned soldier, and quite rightly, and I certainly see no reason why we should not do so in the present bill.

Mr. ADSHEAD: Is not the Civil Service Act purely a federal measure, and would we be justified in saddling this added responsibility upon the provinces?

Mr. MANION: I see no reason, if this legislation is saddled upon the provinces, why they should not have to deal with the returned soldiers also—I see no reason against it. The chairman stated that he was going to rule this out of order. I rather imagined it would be ruled out of order if he adheres to the letter of the law—I will not argue it is a question which should not be ruled out—but if it is ruled out I think the government will be taking not only a wise course and a proper course from the standpoint of the returned soldiers, but taking a good political course also—and they know how to play politics better than anybody else in the House that I know of. And so it might be wise to play a political part along this line and adopt the suggestion. The Minister in charge of the Department of Soldiers Civil Reestablishment should be supporting my suggestion and not opposing it. The Minister of Public Works might adopt it and make it his baby. I will not object. He can take the paternity of it if he likes and make a motion on behalf of the government. What I am trying to do is to get the idea adopted. I do not care who gets the credit as long as it is adopted and put in force for the good of the returned soldiers.

Mr. LADNER: I rose just for a moment to answer the point which was raised by the Minister of Health. For myself I am heartily of the opinion that something should and must be done in connection with these returned men as to whom the hon. member (Mr. Clark) gave a very typical case. We are all getting scores of cases of that kind, and as time goes on there is being developed a real need for consideration on the part of those men whose health is impaired, but which impairment according to medical science cannot be attributed to military service, to use the language of the act. But as I understand the purpose of the amendment it is really within the realm of the general principle of old age