

Supply—Veterans Affairs

effort might be made and a better organization provided in order to accomplish the purpose. That may not be the case but that is the way it has appeared to me through casually hiring men from time to time.

Mr. Herridge: Before the minister answers, I was about to rise to speak on the question of welfare officers coming under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour. In my constituency there happens to be one such officer attached to the employment office in Trail and another at Nelson. They have done most effective and excellent work in looking for jobs for aged veterans. That has been the major employment of these two officers in the last fifteen months. While the Minister of Labour does not believe in psychology, I should like to say to him that his welfare officers' understanding of psychology has meant jobs. Therefore I think there is something to be said for psychology. The point I wish to make is that I am under the impression that the Department of Labour is not as enamoured of the value of these welfare officers as the Department of Veterans Affairs, or as a good many members who are interested in veterans. I understand in some cases they have been dropped, and that at the present time there is pressure to dispose of them. I urge the Minister of Veterans Affairs to use his influence for the retention of these men where they are needed and where they are doing a job. I know in my own constituency they are doing an unquestionably good job.

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. friend said something about psychology. I was one of nine children, and I thought my mother was a pretty fair psychologist. She was not the kind of psychologist that my hon. friend is talking about, but she raised the family and did not do a bad job. In the light of these new-fangled ideas, those who went before us did not do a bad job and they left a pretty decent heritage to the people of Canada based on simple things.

Referring to what my hon. friend said about the organization of the employment service, I think it has worked reasonably well. I have not the figures before me now but I would be glad to provide them when the estimates of my department are under consideration. We have laid special emphasis on the placement of returned soldiers and handicapped people. Comparing the results with the experiments in other places, I think we may well be proud of the people employed in the employment service of Canada.

It is a very difficult thing, but those of us who were in the first great war have some knowledge of the confusion that existed after

the war. We are not taking all the credit for what has been done. We had the experience of the first great war and we acted on it in a big and broad way. When you consider that we moved over a million people from the fighting forces into gainful employment in less than six months, that is some indication of the efficiency of the organization. There is nothing perfect in this life. Anybody can play the horses after the race is run. I think with the co-operation of all sections of society in Canada we have done a reasonable job. Mind you, I also take the view, if I may say so, that I do not believe in a planned economy. The only place you can plan is in a penitentiary where everyone does as he is told, goes to bed and gets up on orders and wears the same clothes.

We possibly had more control over the movement of human beings during the war than at any time in the history of North America. I was convinced in my own mind that Canadians made good airmen, soldiers and sailors, but that they were free men and wanted to get back to private endeavour. If I wanted to do a thing in those days I used to make a speech that everybody understood. I said "Selective service is down the drain." There is no equivocation in a statement of that description. I think we can be thankful that the Canadian people took that advice. In peacetime if you have a decade of the state moving people around it is the easiest thing in the world to slip into the method of government direction that we see in other countries. If you do that in the formative stages of life I think any nation will live to regret it. I think the Canadian people used good common sense in the movement of our people out of the fighting forces into productive employment in industry, agriculture and commerce in its broadest sense.

Mr. Herridge: I should like to ask the Minister of Labour a question. Does he believe in assisting the employment of veterans by continuing so far as possible the use of veterans placement officers in his department?

Mr. Mitchell: Absolutely. I want to say that without any equivocation whatsoever.

Mr. Fulton: I should like to ask the minister what amount was spent last year under the equivalent item for travelling expenses, staff, for which he is asking \$164,000 this year.

Mr. Gregg: The item of \$164,000 for 1950-51 provides for the cost of travelling for the veterans welfare branch staff at head office and in the districts. Costs incurred for investigation, and reports in connection with applications for the benefits in connection with