

*Forces—Reinstatement in Employment*

soldiers in resoration to health, or pensions to be paid for disability; training the ex-soldiers for trades, giving students an opportunity to complete their education; and finally employment assured to discharged soldiers or in default of employment, the payment of unemployment insurance.

If the conditions to-day are such as I have described, when we have so few men discharged, what would happen if the war should end now and 400,000 men were discharged from the army, the navy and the air force, and 700,000 men in war industries became unemployed because the industries in which they are employed were no longer necessary.

I find nothing to indicate that the experience of the last nine or ten months since the order in council came into being, the experience of Canada since even the outbreak of the war, has in any way resulted in the embodying of the results of such experience in this bill. As a matter of fact, it is based on the British act which was passed at the outbreak of the war before Britain had any experience at all. The provisions of the order in council of June, 1941, are unchanged. This bill does nothing but embody the terms of the order in council because of a promise to that effect that was given at the time by the then minister of labour. My suggestion is this: None of us wants these men to return to the relief rolls. But this bill will only prevent our ex-soldiers returning to the relief rolls in the event of their coming within the ambit of the bill which is very limited in its application in that it refers to ex-soldiers who were not in temporary employment when they enlisted.

I suggest that the whole bill be submitted to a committee of the house, as was the plebiscite bill. Let it be redrafted and made to cover the various contingencies and eventualities that can arise and have already arisen. Other legislation is being introduced in connection with ex-soldier problems such as land settlement and the like—I believe it is to be introduced next week. Have the whole matter of service men's rehabilitation placed before a committee of this house and hold up the bill for the time being. No harm will occur, as the order in council is still in effect. There is no rush in having it passed. Let this parliament produce a bill that will give hope and courage to the men of the armed forces, and will provide in unmistakable terms for every contingency and eventuality that may arise or has arisen in connection with the whole problem of rehabilitation of our soldiers upon their return to civilian life.

I entirely agree with my leader's statement that as it stands at present the bill is difficult of enforcement, because there are

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

loopholes in practically every section. Without going into details now I would point to section 4 which defines the circumstances under which an employer must reemploy a returned soldier who was formerly in his employ. It contains several loopholes, as do several other sections to which I shall make reference when the individual sections are being discussed. Experience has proven in my opinion that parliament cannot legislate a people into doing that which public opinion does not demand or sanction and actively support.

If this debate has done nothing else, I believe it will rivet the attention of the people of Canada to this problem of rehabilitation. If we are going to discharge our responsibilities in fairness and equity towards these men before the problem becomes too great and with the experience we have already had, I suggest that the whole matter should be submitted to a committee of the house so that the fullest consideration will be given to this problem. The whole matter should be canvassed now before it is too late, in the interest of the men who are in service overseas and seeking to prevent the difficulties that will arise when the war ends unless action is taken now, and in order to remove the feeling of resentment that must inevitably arise in a community where men in the position I have referred to return and find themselves on relief. We do not want our men to receive as their recompense for military service overseas the opportunity to go on relief rolls.

Mr. COLDWELL: I think no group or member of the house would deny that we should endeavour to give this bill and its principle every support. But as the hon. member for Lake Centre has said, it touches only the fringe of a very large subject.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): We admit that.

Mr. COLDWELL: His suggestion is not new; it has been made in this house on a number of occasions, although I am glad he repeated it this afternoon.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): It was not made before on this bill.

Mr. COLDWELL: But this bill touches only the fringe of the problem that has been referred to many times in this house. The suggestion is that a committee of the house should be set up to go into the whole matter of reestablishment, rehabilitation and so on, both now and after the war. I believe that we shall be faced with a grave problem following the war. The hon. member for Vancouver East a few moments ago pointed out that we