

Supply—Veterans Affairs

other evening, as to why the decrease had not been greater in Ottawa as compared with the districts.

One factor, amongst others which are in the same category, is the fact that the \$80,000 in a single item appears in the total under Ottawa administration, which last year was part of the item referred to on page 67 under the heading "terminable services". It will be noted at the bottom of the column, "appropriation not required for 1950-51, \$2,176,000". That was the large item for medals, production and distribution. The remainder to carry through that task this year has been transferred into headquarters administration under the item of \$80,000.

Referring to personnel again, it will be noted that under departmental administration some improvement has been made in permanencies at a time when 74 have been let out. Under "district administration" there is a total of 194 less this year than last, and again some permanencies have been obtained. Under "veterans welfare services", which is a reorientation of the old rehabilitation services, the lesser number of employees is marked. There is a total of 349 less than last year. Under "treatment services" we were perhaps a little optimistic in our estimate. I shall explain that situation more thoroughly when we come to the supplementaries. I think we shall have to ask for more than we have in the main estimate there, but as shown in the book there are 487 less. Under "prosthetic services" there is only 1 less. In the Canadian pension commission there are 22 less. The war veterans allowance board has 8 more than last year, accounted for by the fact that we will need a few more junior staff to cope with the large number of applications this year. Veterans insurance has 5 less; soldier settlement and Veterans Land Act has 168 less.

I should like to say that, in making those reductions in staff, and this is related to the point made by my hon. friend, particularly for those who are getting along in years, we are undertaking to utilize all the resources of the national employment service and in our own department to assist them in finding new employment. We have had a reasonable amount of success in doing so. The younger veterans of this last war who have been let out have found little difficulty in finding other employment.

Mr. Harkness: Just to be more specific on this point, could the minister tell us how many of those people who are listed as temporary employees this year are likely to become permanent employees before the year is out? Are there any estimates of that?

[Mr. Gregg.]

Mr. Gregg: Perhaps I could take that question as notice, and attempt to answer it later?

Mr. Harkness: The minister has mentioned the older employees of the department who are now being let out. During the past two years a considerable number of cases of this kind have come to my attention, men who were veterans of the first war and who got jobs in the Department of Veterans Affairs during this last war or at the end of it. They are now being let out. It seems to me this is a course of action which should be kept to a minimum. I know there are bound to be some cases of men who are not suitable and perhaps have to be let out, but the department itself maintains a bureau to encourage industry to hire older men, particularly older veterans. A lot of propaganda has been put out, and I think it is something which needs even greater attention than has been given to it. The older veterans have extreme difficulty in securing employment. It would seem to me the department should make every effort possible to retain those employees rather than put them out. As the minister says, there is an attempt to find jobs for them through the employment service, but in many cases that attempt is not very successful.

Has the minister any figures concerning the older veterans who have been released from his department, and how many of them have succeeded in finding other employment?

Mr. Gregg: Mr. Chairman, a survey of the older veterans was completed for the year 1948-49. Perhaps that would answer my friend's question. During that period the older veterans whose services were terminated numbered 193; the number placed in alternative employment, 151. A summary of the remainder is as follows: Declined employment offered, 4; inherited a legacy, 1; over 65 years of age, 9; under treatment, that is in hospital, 3; granted war veterans allowance, 3; considered unemployable, 2; left the district and we have no information, 4; on part-time employment for the present and will go on war veterans allowance, 3; apparently unemployed, 13.

Mr. McCusker: I should like to ask the minister if the department has had sufficient experience with that new type of patient that is being admitted, the one who can afford to pay, to determine whether the department is able to collect from that man? I doubt very much whether any veteran, having availed himself of the facilities of the hospital, will pay for them when he is leaving. He will think he is entitled to that, and therefore the department is going to open it up to all veterans who will demand free treatment.