

married couples and families, and I hope the government will see to it that jobs are provided which will guarantee these people that decent standard of living for themselves and their families.

Mr. WHITE: I should like to add just a word to what has been said already. I am sure all hon. members will welcome this change if it is to be for the good of the returned soldier. For a long time I have felt that most of the difficulty lies in the administration of the Pension Act. No doubt the provisions of that act are wide enough to cover all cases, but I am sure all hon. members have had cases brought to their attention which show that in many instances the intent and purpose of the legislation are not being properly carried out. I should like to draw to the attention of the minister the very long delay that takes place in dealing with claims for pensions in the present war. It seems to me that at the present time the number of pension applications being dealt with must be very small. Therefore it is difficult to understand why, after the soldier is discharged, there should be such delay before he has his pension board and a decision is reached. Then, if there is an appeal from that decision there is another very long delay before the appeal is heard. I also hope that when this bill is in the committee stage the minister will be able to give the house and the country a statement as to what has been done to improve the conditions that existed at Christie street hospital last year. I hope he will be able to tell the house that many changes have been made, both in the way the hospital is run and in the conditions under which soldiers have to obtain treatment there. I think the house also will be interested to hear from the minister how far along the plans are for the new hospital at Sunnybrook.

I do not like to repeat what has been said already, but I wish to concur in the remarks of the leader of the opposition on one very important matter. I refer to the onus of proof being on the soldier, who has to prove his claim before the pension board. It has always seemed to me that pensions are handed out to returned soldiers in a most grudging manner, as though it were an act of charity. A pension to a returned soldier is something to which he is legally entitled, and I shall always contend that the onus of proof should be on the pension department, because when a man joins the armed forces he passes a most rigid examination, in the course of which he is often examined by at least three doctors. He is X-rayed and he must pass the most rigid examination. As has just been said by the hon. member for Winnipeg North

Centre (Mr. Knowles), in too many of these cases where a man goes before the pension board he receives in due course a letter which is already printed and which states that his disability was not due to war service, but is a pre-enlistment disability. I cannot understand why a private or a non-commissioned officer should have to fight the entire pension board. Everything seems to be set against him before his case is even heard.

Once a man is accepted in A-1 category I think it is only fair and just that any future disability should be considered a disability attributable to war service. There have been many soldiers in this war who have suffered from mental and nervous conditions, and I hope that when the bill is before us the minister will give us the number of these cases and whether they are being reviewed. In reply to a question which I asked some time ago a return was brought down which stated that the scale of pensions had been set some fifteen or so years ago and that there had been no change in the scale or rate of pension since that time. Since 1939 cost of living bonuses have been paid and other financial arrangements have been made for other people, but there has been no change in the rate of pension paid to soldiers. The pension for total disability is still \$75, the same as it was when it was set fifteen years ago.

I should like to say a word about what the hon. member for Temiscouata said. He claimed that his county has supplied more recruits for the armed forces of Canada than any other county in Canada. Each one of us likes to feel that his county has supplied the largest number of recruits, and I think it would be most interesting and instructive if the Minister of National Defence once and for all would break down the statement and give us the exact number of enlistments by provinces.

In conclusion, I should like to bring to the attention of the minister the question of clothing allowances. It seems unfortunate that in many of these cases changes are made only when it is too late. First I should like to refer to the clothing allowance granted to officers. Up until some two or three months ago when a man received a commission he was given a clothing allowance of \$150, and this was increased at that time to \$250. However, as usual the change was not made retroactive. The number of officers who will now be taken into the army must necessarily be quite small. When the estimates of the Minister of National Defence under the war appropriation bill were before the committee