Dislikes Stigma
In Dishonorable Discharge Paper

Ottawa, Oct. 29 (CP).—The Commons Committee on Veterans' Affairs, extending its study of the ramifications of dishonorable discharge, listened today to conversations that were climaxed in the statement that such a discharge, in its effect on the man's future, was equivalent to "a life sentence."

That phrase came from Clarence Gillis (C.C.E., Cape Breton South) in charging that the stigma of service dishonor, made permanent in his discharge certificate, hung over the ex-serviceman's head in every attempt to re-establish himself.

He was joined by others in contending that that fate had befallen men who, after five years of solid good service, had committed some infraction of military rules after the war ended. From that act they lost not only all discharge benefits, but the good name they needed to begin their civilian life anew.

Recommended by Board

Committee Chairman Walter Tucker, Parliamentary Assistant to Veterans Minister Mackenzie, recalled that the Board of Review of the War Service Grants Act—amendments to which now are under committee study—had recommended payment of gratuity to large numbers of men with misconduct discharges and had recommended, too, that any reference to misconduct be stricken from their documents.

The committee adjourned until tomorrow with two proposed amendments to that board's powers still before it.

One would enlarge its powers to allow it to recommend payment of gratuity regardless of the type of discharge; the other—moved by Maj.-Gen. G. B. Pearkes, VC (P.C., Nanaimo)—would make payment of gratuity automatic to all service-men except those with discharge for civil offenses, thus ending reference to the board of any discharges for policy military reasons.

The board now can recommend payment of gratuity to a man summarily discharged for misconduct, but not after a court-martial or for a civil offense. It has also, conversely, decided against payment of gratuity to men with clear discharges because its members found that their record was such that they might have been discharged for misconduct.

Its powers to continue doing this are another subject the committee will decide.

It heard today a submission by three representatives of the Canadian Legion in the United States urging extension of more of Canada's discharge benefits to those veterans who return to the United States to live.