

The Address—Mr. Balcom

a first-class port we need an airport other than that used by the military services.

Mr. Speaker, during the last session of parliament there was a great deal of criticism of the defence services for extravagance and waste. It is apparent from the election results that most of these charges were without real foundation. Many of them were vague and lacking in constructive suggestions for improvement. They deserve the oblivion which was their fate.

But we would be very unwise to assume that we have the best of all possible worlds, in our own defence expenditures, any more than in all aspects of our business life, both public and private.

We are all painfully aware of the high cost of medical services. Further, the demand for such services is so great that economy in their use is essential. Moreover, we all feel that every Canadian should have the best health care possible. In particular, our service personnel must be assured of the best available medical services, in peace or in war, either in preparation for combat duty or in treatment after injury, or sickness. This is demanded not only for humanitarian reasons; it is vital for morale as well.

I suggest that a more efficient and effective organization of our medical services is possible. Why should the army, navy and air force be in competition with one another in the medical field? With the specialized training required and the relatively limited personnel in terms of numbers, would it not be more sensible to have a single corps serve the three forces? Thereby you would have a more intimate, and a broader, opinion from the knowledge of the combined medical brains.

The dental services are already consolidated. So why not follow their example in the medical corps? A limited sharing of hospital facilities takes place now but this process could go further if the medical services, both doctors and nurses, were unified too. In my opinion, this is one branch where the same or better services could be obtained at less cost to the taxpayer.

I would like to speak for a moment on the matter of immigrants coming to Canada from England to take up permanent residence. I, with many others, feel that some consideration should be given to British subjects on the question of our Canadian old age pension. As British subjects coming to Canada, they should not be subject to the rule of twenty years' residence before they are entitled to the pension.

The application of this restrictive clause puts immigrants coming to us from the

British Isles on the same basis with those coming from foreign countries such as Germany, Holland, Czechoslovakia. I do not single these countries out particularly. I want to mention some. I submit that this clause should not apply to the British Isles people, subjects of Her Majesty, citizens of the commonwealth.

And then again I would like to draw to your attention the fact that English immigrants have been contributing to the pension scheme in vogue in the old country, but they have to forfeit that on leaving. In my humble opinion some sort of recognition should be in effect to create a continuity of pensionable years. It seems to me that this is the least we could do for these people.

I would like to mention also the question of post-war credits in England which almost everyone holds. These are not payable until 65 years of age. This, therefore, prevents many people from coming to Canada. If these post-war credits were released by the British government to persons emigrating to Canada, it would be a great assistance towards passage money. And I am suggesting to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration that the officials give this matter serious consideration and endeavour to arrange with the British government for the release of these credits.

Mr. Speaker, although this government has done much in the field of health, welfare and pensions, there are still groups that appear to have been forgotten over the years and who now should be given sympathetic consideration. I shall refer to only some of those who are affected, such as retired government employees, and this would include Canadian National staff who retired ten, fifteen years ago on a pension as low as \$25 per month.

This just should not be, and some arrangement should be made to bring these payments up to a point commensurate with the present-day cost of living. The same situation exists with service personnel of the navy and army who retired with a pension that is completely out of line today. To be specific, I would mention the case of a major, retired on an earned pension of \$75 per month about fifteen years ago, who is expected to live on that at present-day costs. Today a major retiring under the same terms of service would receive practically four times that.

This brings me into the matter of superannuation. We appreciate that every eventuality cannot be provided for, but I would respectfully suggest that somewhere along the line the old department of veterans affairs employees, or department of soldiers civil re-establishment of 1919 and 1924, have a grievance that should be righted. It appears