

PROCEEDINGS AND MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

COMMITTEE ROOM 435,

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

TUESDAY, April 13, 1920.

The Special Committee on Pensions and Civil Re-establishment of soldiers met at 11 a.m., the Chairman, Mr. Hume Cronyn, presiding.

Other Members present:—Messieurs Béland, Bolton, Brien, Caldwell, Clark, Cooper, Copp, Devlin, Green, Lang, MacNutt, McGibbon, McGregor, Morphy, Nesbitt, Peck, Pardee, Power, Redman, Ross, Savard, Turgeon and Tweedie,—24.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to thank the Committee for the honour it has done me in selecting me as their Chairman. I regret that I was not a member of the Re-establishment Committee last year, and must ask those who were members to give me all the assistance they can when the question of re-establishment comes up. I have endeavoured to read the evidence: I have not got through it, as it is a big book, and I have the disadvantage of not having heard the witnesses and learned just what recommendations you submitted, but fortunately we have, as Vice-Chairman, Mr. Nesbitt, who was very regular in his attendance last year, and I hope he will keep me right.

Mr. PARDEE: How does the reference read?

The CHAIRMAN: The reference reads as follows:—

“That the Committee be authorized to continue the inquiries instituted by the Committee on Re-establishment last session into such matters as may call for further investigation.”

That is as far as re-establishment is concerned. As far as the question of pensions is concerned the Committee is instructed:

“To consider the question of continuing the war bonus now being paid to pensioners under the existing pension law, and any amendments to the law which may be proposed or may be considered necessary by the Committee, and to report the result to the House.”

There is a large volume of correspondence in the hands of the Secretary and, I presume, it would be advisable for the Committee to first go over that correspondence in order to become familiar with its contents.

Mr. NESBITT: There are a lot of communications here dealing with the various questions that will come before the Committee. We have recommendations from the Pension Board and also the recommendations of the Great War Veterans' Association. We will have a great many applications, no doubt, from persons who desire to be heard before the Committee. The correspondence is very large indeed and refers to clauses of the Pension Bill and to other matters that have been referred to us in connection with re-establishment. I would suggest that the Committee get together around the Table and go over this correspondence and recommendations and see just what evidence we are going to call, and on what questions we are going to call the evidence so that we will start out in a regular way and get the whole thing thrashed out as soon as possible. There will, no doubt, be a great deal of evidence tendered that will not enlighten us on any of the subjects that we have to consider, so I think we should first thrash out the subjects upon which we desire to obtain evidence and then instruct