

Supply—Veterans Affairs

in fact. Not one suggestion had been made during the two years I have been Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of that fact, and because I have looked very carefully into these things in the department, I do not propose to go into the background of what is known as the McCann commission.

Mr. Blackmore: Which means that the minister does not propose to tell the committee how it came about that when specific charges of falsification of records and misdeeds of psychiatrists were made on July 16, 1947, the commission was set up with terms of reference specifically omitting both of those charges?

Mr. Gregg: It was not a commission in the formal sense. If I read the story of my distinguished predecessor correctly, that commission which represented both sides of the house was set up with a sincere desire to have charges that were presented at that time looked into fully and carefully and informally. I do not think there was ever intention of calling counsel and making it in substance a commission. I am completely satisfied that if there had been any basis for the charge that records had been falsified, or in the other matter referred to by the hon. member for Lethbridge, the gentlemen who went west on that commission would have taken them into consideration in their report.

Mr. Blackmore: The minister's statements are entirely out of contact with the facts. The commission was set up under part I of the Inquiries Act, and to call the proceedings of such a commission set up under such circumstances informal is nothing but sheer nonsense. If it was never intended that this should be a formal commission investigating in a first-class manner, why was all the trouble taken to set it up under part I of the Inquiries Act?

Mr. Goode: The minister has mentioned that the British Columbia members have made no representations in this matter, and he is correct. As a new member of the house, I had representations made to me some time ago about these cases. I have learned in the short time I have been here that I am on safe ground to refer such cases to certain veterans organizations. If these organizations support them then I take them to the department. I can say now that when I took two of these cases to a certain veterans organization the organization did not support them, and therefore I have not brought them to the attention of the minister.

Mr. Mutch: Before the item is carried may I say a word. It falls to my lot to say a few words about one who, for some thirty years,

[Mr. Gregg.]

has been a "good companion" to all who have sought in this chamber and elsewhere to serve in civil life those who served all of us in Canada's wars. It is both a privilege and an honour to pay tribute to one who so richly deserves it. It is a pleasure deeply tinged with regret that the time has come when such tribute can be appropriately made. Perhaps no one in the house has been blessed with a wider opportunity to work and enjoy a measure of intimacy with Dr. Woods than it has been my good fortune to enjoy.

There are others more qualified than I to speak of the genius which he brought to bear upon the problem of organization in the Department of Veterans Affairs. There are many in the chamber who will have had personal experience of his patience and unflinching tact as he sat with us in various committees. There are many indeed who have experienced his help in attempting to obtain benefits for veterans who had appealed to them.

I should like to pay my tribute to the man himself. For more than three decades he has made a career of seeking the ultimate good of Canadian veterans. This has been his life work, he has made their problem his problem, and from their ranks he has drawn many of his personal friends. In Dr. Woods' relations with his associates he has been a loyal colleague and a considerate chief. Under his example his associates have been inspired to regard their jobs as an opportunity for and indeed a call to service.

Walter Woods, as he is known to thousands, served in the ranks in world war I. It is characteristic of the man that even then he was enlisted in a cause rather than embarked upon a career. As a senior civil servant Walter Woods has lived up to the best traditions of the service. He has never forgotten that to a man in trouble his problem is, for the moment, the most important thing in his life. He has not forgotten that members of parliament, however limited in their personal capacities, appear in this house and in departmental offices clothed with the dignity which public election has conferred upon them. Because of this quality Walter Woods has been able, yielding nothing from the dignity of his own office, to be friendly, courteous and co-operative, and never compromising the position of those who sought his help.

It has been said, and I think rightly, that Canada came out of world war II better organized than any other allied country to meet the immediate post-war problems of the veteran. That this was true was and still remains a wonderful tribute to the late Right Hon. Ian Mackenzie and the government