

(No. 161.)

Sir,

Castle of St. Lewis, Quebec, 18 July 1832.

MR. Commissary-general Routh has communicated to me the copy of a letter which he addressed to you on the 25th ult., containing several suggestions for the consideration of the Lords of the Treasury and the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, respecting pensioners who have commuted their pensions, and come out to settle on lands in Upper or Lower Canada.

I have now the honour of addressing you for the purpose of expressing my entire concurrence in the suggestions of Mr. Routh. Their adoption would obviate a large share of the distress to which these men are exposed on their arrival at Quebec under the existing forms now affecting them, of the labour now imposed upon the Commissariat Department, and of the responsibility which the General commanding is continually called on to incur in consequence of the absence of the necessary documents to authorize the payment of the balance due to those commuted pensioners, or, in the event of their decease, to their families.

It has been found generally that these men are persons of irregular and disorderly habits, and extremely improvident in matters connected with their own welfare. It becomes an act of kindness, therefore, to take measures to guard them against the effects of their own imprudence; and in this view I take leave to add one other suggestion to those of Mr. Routh, by submitting that the commuted pensioners, instead of receiving the whole of the balance of their commuted pensions on their arrival in Canada, should be paid by two instalments: the first instalment, equal to one-third part of the balance, by the Commissariat Department upon the production of the necessary documents, to enable the commuted pensioner to proceed to the place of destination; and the second instalment, equal to the remaining two-thirds of the balance, when he shall have established himself upon land, or shall have entered upon some employment with the view to his future maintenance and that of his family.

The latter part of this arrangement (the payment of the second instalment) may be carried into effect through the agency of the Commissioner of Crown lands or other local authority, under the directions of the Governor of the colony.

Without some check of the above description, it is much to be feared that the intentions of Government to enable these men to become serviceable to themselves and families will be defeated, and that the commutation of pensioners, instead of accomplishing that object, will be found in numerous instances to be an encouragement to dissolute habits, and an indirect mode of creating paupers of the worst description, at once a burthen to the public and a disgrace to society.

I have, &c

The Honourable James Stewart.

(signed) *Aylmer*, Commander of the Forces.

Sir,

Commissariat, Canada, Quebec, 25 June 1832.

I REQUEST you will do me the honour to submit the following case in reference to the commuted Chelsea Pensioners, for the consideration of the Right honourable my Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, and if my Lords should approve of this recommendation, to solicit their favourable reference of the subject to the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital.

The orders from home for these payments seldom, if ever, reach this country through the post-office, *via* Halifax, until from a month to six or eight weeks, and sometimes longer, after the arrival of the pensioners.

Many pensioners arrive, particularly from Ireland, whose instruction papers have been withdrawn from them on payment of the first advance.

Some are provided with letters from the War-office, stating the amount advanced at home, and in some instances, these letters have been taken from them.

In many cases they have lost all their papers of every description.

Frequently it occurs, that the rate of pension has been altered, and not corrected in the instruction paper, from a higher to a lower rate.

Adverting to these difficulties, I venture to suggest to you the following observations:—

That the instruction papers should be taken from the pensioner at home.

That a certificate should be enclosed from Chelsea Hospital to the Senior Commissariat Officer at the station to which they are proceeding, according to the annexed form.

The object of this recommendation is to enable the Commissariat to pay off these men immediately on their arrival, on identifying them.

The men would be saved from much distress, and more inconvenience, from selling their clothes for subsistence from the necessity of herding together in the midst of disease, in the filthy taverns to which they resort for shelter, and where they are tempted to intoxication and excess, and frequently robbed. Many might thus be paid without landing their families or baggage, which would enable them to proceed forthwith to their locations in the Upper Province, to a more certain employment and more congenial climate.

It would be also advantageous to assign periods for their commutations, and that no pensioner should be allowed to commute after the sailing of the spring fleet, by which means he would have time to secure something before the approach of winter. Those who arrive in the autumn have, for the most part, no alternative until the spring but the charity of the community.

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