

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, OTTAWA,

COMMITTEE ROOM 318,

THURSDAY, April 25, 1918.

The special committee appointed to consider and report upon the Pension Board, the Pension Regulations, etc., met at 11 o'clock, a.m., the chairman, Hon. N. W. Rowell, presiding.

The CHAIRMAN: Yesterday we were in the course of hearing Mr. Archibald's statement, which was interrupted in order that we might hear from Mr. Knight. Is it the desire of the committee that Mr. Archibald should resume and allow members of the committee to ask him any further questions that they desire? Perhaps before Mr. Archibald resumes we might hear from the Army and Navy Veterans.

Sergt. HERBERT A. JARVIS, representing the Army and Navy Veterans, appeared at the request of the committee. He said: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—There is a great amount of dissatisfaction between the ranks regarding pensions, I think you will all admit that, because this committee has been appointed. I think they can be classed under four heads. The first is the discrimination between the officers and the ranks; the second is inadequate pensions; the third is having pensions reduced without reason or without the man being notified; the fourth is receiving no pensions at all.

In the first case an officer is, as a rule, granted a pension. An officer appears in front of a medical board and his statement is taken as true; a man appears in front of the medical board, and his statement is always treated as untrue or as a malingerer until he can prove otherwise, except in the case of an open wound, the loss of an arm, an eye, a foot or leg. If it is a complaint such as tubercular, myalgia, deafness, nephritis and other diseases along that line he is treated with a certain amount of—I will not say as a malingerer, but he is not accorded the same hearing as an officer would be. There is a case I have in mind of a man serving eighteen months in France, returning suffering from valvular disease of the heart, and he was granted five dollars a month as pension. In the case of an officer who returned from France after serving one month in France, I understand four days in the trenches, he received a 100 per cent disability pension, but it proves he is not disabled, because he is in a position now to earn a salary of \$5,000 a year. I do not know what salary he would earn if he was not disabled, but that goes to show there is a discrimination between the ranks and the officers. It is suggested along that line that pensions be uniform; that representatives on the medical board be from the ranks as well as officers; at present the board consists of officers and civilians; the rank and file is not represented.

As to inadequate pensions, I have here a case of a man who is at present in the hospital. He went to France in 1915 and he had a compound fracture of the left arm; he has lost the eyesight of one eye and the other is going, practically gone. He was at the battle of the Somme and he also suffered from trench feet. That man receives \$25 a month, and he has had to go into hospital very recently.

By Mr. Nickle:

Q. What is the name of that case?—A. Ferguson.

Q. What is his number?—A. 145374. This is his statement over his signature.

Q. What was that?—A. Compound fracture of the left arm.

Q. What is the percentage of his disability?—A. That would be 50 per cent; eyesight of left eye completely gone; right arm, compound fracture; arm cannot be used, and he is now attending Fleming Home for massage treatment. That is a case of inadequate pension.