

Pensions branch.

477. Canadian pension commission—administration expenses—further amount required, \$36,444.

Mr. GILLIS: With regard to the laying down of regulations respecting soldiers in this war, where does the responsibility rest—with the Department of Finance or with the department of pensions? I have had some correspondence with those operating charitable homes across the country who try to find homes for unfortunate children, by way of adoption. Under the present regulations a child adopted by a man now serving in the forces is not eligible for dependent's allowance if the adoption was after enlistment. I have discussed the matter with the department of pensions on previous occasions; I have gone to the Department of National Defence and they have set out a long list of requirements which indicate that the matter would have to go to the privy council. The woman would have to prove that she was incapable of bearing children, and so on. I have one specific case in mind; I will send the letter to the minister.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): We have no jurisdiction in that case.

Mr. GILLIS: I think the minister's department should. Children will be important to Canada in future years. These homes that are run on a charitable basis have been able to find places for children, but owing to this particular regulation their work is practically stopped. I have been trying to get it started again, but I have had very little success. National Defence has complete jurisdiction in the matter.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): As regards the two points raised by the hon. member, I have not the slightest jurisdiction. Our functions begin the moment after the man is discharged. The sole and undisturbed jurisdiction rests with the Canadian pension commission and every case on discharge by reason of medical unfitness is automatically referred to the commission. The Canadian pension commission decides whether they are eligible or not.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I know of one man who was injured at Petawawa camp and later discharged, and there is no record in his medical history that his disability was directly the result of the night operations in which he was engaged at the time. I have found it difficult to understand how, by reference to the medical records that are kept, the pension commission can possibly decide whether or not a man's disability was attributable to service. In this case there is evidence

that the man, who belonged to the anti-tank battalion, was out on night manoeuvres and that he jumped out of a truck in the dark and suffered a hernia and an injured back. It was recommended that he be given a truss, but he could not get it for six months. He was discharged in March, 1942, but the injury took place in July, 1941. The report from the pension commission states that the man's injury was not attributable directly or indirectly to service. Has anything been done by the department of pensions, in conjunction with the Department of National Defence, to see that proper records are kept with regard to injuries?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): The matter of records is of course one for the service in which the man is engaged. In this case, or in any other like it, even if there is no written record or evidence, if he can obtain the evidence of those who were serving with him, his comrades, or other observers of the accident, it would go very far towards establishing his case. If the hon. member will refer the matter to me I will see that it is investigated. He does not necessarily have to have a written record or written evidence. He can produce his comrades who saw him slip and get injured.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: What opportunity has he of offering such evidence?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): At the second hearing.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: He was discharged from the army, his allowance was cut off, and he is unable to support himself. What seemed to me to be wrong was that such a thing could occur. There should be a closer check on these injuries.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I have no jurisdiction in that regard, but he could get the evidence of some of his comrades or other eye witnesses and it might assist him.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Will he have an opportunity of bringing these people here?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Certainly, or he can obtain written certificates or any evidence he can get. There is a very humanitarian spirit at work in every possible case, and where we can help we will.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I appreciate that attitude, but what would happen if this man were overseas?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): He would have to get affidavits or statutory declarations.