

## SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON RETURNED SOLDIERS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

OTTAWA, Wednesday, 25th April, 1917.

The Special Committee, appointed to consider, inquire into and report upon the reception, treatment, care, training and re-education of the wounded, disabled and convalescent returned soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces, in accordance with a Resolution adopted by the Committee, beg to present to the House the following

### PRELIMINARY REPORT:

Your Committee, pursuant to the Resolution passed by the House on Wednesday, 7th February last, appointing Nine Members to constitute the Committee, met on the said 7th February, when the following Members, namely, Sir Herbert Ames, Hon. Chas. Marcil, Hon. F. B. McCurdy, Mr. W. S. Middlebro, Mr. F. F. Pardee, Mr. Duncan C. Ross, and Mr. Donald Sutherland were present, and elected Sir Herbert Ames as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee at once proceeded to consider what information could be secured regarding existing agencies of assistance given to disabled returned soldiers and instructed the Clerk of the Committee to request the attendance of certain gentlemen of the Military Hospitals Commission, and of the Militia Department to appear and give evidence before the Committee.

On Thursday, 22nd February, when your Committee again met, the Chairman's attention was directed to what the Members of the Committee considered a technical difficulty. Your Committee had not been given power to send for persons and papers, to report from time to time, to adjourn from place to place, to print for the use of the Committee the evidence taken, nor could it ask leave to do so owing to the extending adjournment of the House. Obviously, there was but one course to follow in order to conform strictly to the Rule. All Nine Members present considered that the Inquiry was urgent and that it was the undoubted desire of the House that the Committee should hold immediate sessions. Your Committee thereupon resolved to proceed with the Inquiry as if it had been granted leave by the House to send for persons and papers, to report from time to time, to adjourn from place to place, and to print for the use of the Committee the evidence taken. Notwithstanding this, your Committee, during the adjournment has held ten business sessions at which important testimony was given, and statements and papers were submitted by representatives of Returned Soldiers' Associations, Provincial Soldiers' Aid Commissions, Military Hospitals, Convalescent Homes and Benevolent Societies from every province of the Dominion. Four sessions were held in Ottawa, two in Montreal, and four in Toronto. The Inquiry in respect to the first matter of reference is almost terminated so far as the hearing of evidence is concerned, and your Committee will be able to present to the House an Interim Report in the course of three or four weeks.

Your Committee therefore recommends to the House the desirability of ratifying the action of the Committee in having proceeded with the Inquiry as if the House had granted to the Committee, at the time of its appointment, the various powers and authorities above mentioned, and the Committee further recommends that such powers and authorities be granted for the future work of the Committee, and in addition thereto, that the Committee be empowered to sit while the House is in Session. (See also Votes and Proceedings, pp. 233-234.)