

now working, and who heard the first blast of the trumpet that called them to the fields of France. I must say that I have a little sentiment along that line as well. On general principles we need to be most careful of our means at the present time, and I think as few citizens as reasonably possible should be encouraged to do that which in the old British proverb is called, Begging from those who are ready to steal. If I were a Pole, and at the present moment in Poland, and the 4 p.m. choice were offered me to stay there with a fair livelihood or go to Canada with an old shirt, I should immediately ask for the shirt. I do not think these men are to be commiserated too much if they got back to Canada at all, —I think any man who gets back from almost any portion of Europe at the present moment is very well off to find himself in Canada. Of course, that is no argument why we should not discharge all just claims, but I cannot see why in this particular case the claim stands any fair interpretation of the word "justice." As I said, it is a difficult question, Mr. Speaker, but I for one feel inclined to support the committee, and I shall do so.

Mr. VIEN: Does my hon. friend remember that we are talking of Canadian-born citizens when he says that it would not be too much of a misfortune if they had been left overseas?

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer): My hon. friend is utterly wrong. I never said anything about the misfortune of being left overseas. I said I should consider myself more fortunate to be in Canada, and that it would be a misfortune to me to be left overseas, especially if in the neighbourhood of Poland. My hon. friend did not understand what I said.

Mr. E. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Mr. Speaker, I desire to give an intelligent vote —if I can do so—and therefore I want the explanation necessary to that end. We have been told that as far as pensions are concerned these men are treated exactly like Canadian soldiers.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I want to know if that is so.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Then I say they should be treated like Canadian soldiers.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

[Mr. M. Clark.]

Mr. LAPOINTE: I do not see why this matter is so laughable when we are talking of men who went to serve their country and the Allied cause and did their duty.

Mr. CURRIE: Does not my hon. friend—

Mr. LAPOINTE: The smiles and laughter of my hon. friend from North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) are absolutely out of place. If we cannot give these men anything else, at least let us give them respect.

Mr. CURRIE: Does not the hon. gentleman know that it is not pensions that are asked for on behalf of these men, but the same pay and allowances as our Canadian soldiers received?

Mr. LAPOINTE: I asked my hon. friend from South Renfrew (Mr. Pedlow) and he says that these men should be given the same pensions as those granted to Canadian soldiers.

Mr. CURRIE: No, pay and allowances.

Mr. LAPOINTE: He must know what he is after in moving this amendment.

Mr. COOPER: The recommendation is right there.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Will you permit me to state my own case? My hon. friend from North Simcoe is the man who knows it all in this House, we are aware of that, but I will ask his indulgence and that of the House for a short time while I state my views. These men were Canadian citizens; nobody denies that; they were not reservists of any other country. The fact that they were subject to the Military Service Act, as was stated by the Minister of Militia (Mr. Guthrie), is no argument against their claim, for they would have been compelled to serve in the Canadian army if they had not been allowed by this country to volunteer for service in the Polish army. Authority was given to raise that regiment, the men who enlisted did so with the full consent of the Canadian authorities, and, as I have stated, the fact that they were subject to the Military Service Act has no bearing on their case at all. Indeed, if they had been conscripts they would be entitled to full pension, for there is not one law for volunteers and another law for conscripts.

Another argument is that they were not paid the same rate, as soldiers in the Polish army, that they would have been paid as Canadian soldiers. But they deserve all the more credit. If they were taking the same chances, enduring the same sufferings, and were paid less money, is that a reason