

ment would consider during the recess the advisability or possibility of giving relief under one or two headings: (1) the widows of those in receipt of war veterans' allowance; (2) to the widows of those pensioned. The widow of a pensioner with 50 per cent disability may receive a pension when he dies, but the committee felt, on the recommendation of the Canadian legion, that that should be reduced. Probably hon. members are aware that the Canadian legion at the last convention altered the whole basis of their recommendation in this matter and have asked the government to consider it on the basis of compassionate pension. The legion's suggestion is something analogous to the scheme which we passed last year in the parliamentary committee on pensions, for those who were not qualified for pension ordinarily in this war. I have asked the chairman of the Canadian pension commission to make a careful survey of the conditions. I can tell the hon. member that the matter has been carefully investigated.

Mr. GRAYDON: How many pensions have been granted to veterans of this present war?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): The total to March 31, 1942, was 2,130, of which 1,283 were disability.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: Do I understand that the widows of soldiers in this war are now receiving pensions under the clause to which the minister referred?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Yes.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: Have any widows of veterans of the first war received pensions under that same clause?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): No, it does not apply to them. That is the point I made a few minutes ago. It was the recommendation of the Canadian legion at the recent convention, that the same principle of compassionate pension applicable to those who would not ordinarily qualify in this war be applied to non-pensioned widows of the last war.

Item agreed to.

Services to veterans and dependents.

210. Care of patients, \$3,475,397.

Mr. ESLING: Conditions for treatment are reasonably generous, but in many instances geographic conditions discriminate very markedly against certain ex-service men. Recent amendments provided that where under certain conditions a man made his way to Shaughnessy hospital in British Columbia,

or to any military hospital, he was given treatment and the government paid his way home. He had to make his way there at his own expense. The unfortunate thing is that men living at a distance from a hospital are often unable to bear the expense of travel and have to forgo this treatment, whereas men living in Vancouver or at the coast have merely to pay a street car fare. Of course the treatment is accorded also at any hospital where the government has a salaried physician, but there are salaried physicians only in Vancouver, Kamloops and at one other point.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Prince Rupert.

Mr. ESLING: Will the minister consider having a salaried physician in the interior of British Columbia? It takes as long to get to Kamloops from East Kootenay or the Kootenay lake district as to get to Vancouver. It is certainly a hardship and a discrimination against ex-service men living in the interior.

Let me cite one instance. A discharged soldier was ill at his home. He had to be taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital. There he incurred expense in excess of \$400. He applied for reimbursement and was simply told he should have gone to the military hospital in Vancouver. A man who has to be taken by ambulance to a hospital twenty-five miles away could hardly be expected to travel five hundred miles to Vancouver for treatment. His condition did not permit it. One would think that the payment of a departmental physician in the interior would not cost much more than the return expense of travel for soldiers who finally reach the coast from the interior.

I would also ask the minister's sympathetic consideration of a suggestion that after the war a convalescent hospital be built in the interior. There could be no more beautiful place than the Kootenay lake district. Following the last war we had a hospital there. One of the largest of the Canadian Pacific summer hotels was used as a convalescent hospital and it did excellent service, taking care of a great many men. Certainly the need of such a hospital will be in evidence toward the end of the war, and I would ask the minister to give thought to that matter at an early date.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I appreciate very much the suggestions made by my hon. friend. As to the first point, the compassionate treatment of class 2 pensioners, that is not for their pensionable disability, I think he has made a very good case for further