

*The Address—Mr. A. L. Smith*

all that sort of thing, but we called it the riding school. They lived upstairs but they were not very good residents. For one thing, they would not take a bath. If you had a rope with two pails attached they would walk along and perhaps splash it over themselves, but beyond that they just would not take a bath. We kids used to go up and watch them eating grass. They would roll it up into little balls, push it in their mouths and eat it. But they refused to bathe.

You can imagine the condition of things. They were not exactly as sanitary as the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) tells us they should be. The police brought them down to Wascana creek, which the right hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) will remember quite well. At that time we did not have the beautiful lake there is there now; there was just a little dam which made a swimming hole for us. I have no doubt the minister has been there many times.

They took them down there and there was one chap who called himself John the Baptist. He was a most recalcitrant creature. They asked John the Baptist if he would go in and take a bath and he said he would not. Four mounties picked him up and—one, two, three, four, and in went John. The weeds in that creek were something. Talk about the sedimentary basin in Alberta! We certainly had one there. Out came John the Baptist and he said that he would not walk back; they would have to carry him. It was then as a youngster that I learned for the first time what a frog march really was. The way they did it was this: There was one on each arm and one on each leg and they marched him with his stomach toward the front. Then as they went along and when John least expected it the fifth man came in with an awful push in the middle of his back and John walked. That is neither here nor there.

What am I seeking for these men? I have their consent to say what I am saying inasmuch as they have their own veterans organization. I had hoped to have the parliamentary assistant from Coast-Capilano to help me, but I know I have his sympathy. All I am asking at the present time is that these old men who are ill and crippled, and who have retired on these pensions granted long ago, which we all know are not sufficient to maintain life itself, let alone a living in decency, be allowed hospitalization on the basis of military service.

I say, Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect to everyone here, that is not asking a great deal. I realize that it requires the

co-operation of two or probably three departments. There are not many of them left. They are pretty well all gone now. It seems to me that the cost would be small and would not violate any principle except to convince ourselves that those men were keepers of the peace who did not leave their jobs at five o'clock. I am not criticizing people who do; do not misunderstand me. In the old days, and I think it is still true, a mounted policeman who lost a prisoner after five days on account of lack of sleep was put in the clink. That was true then.

I remember a poor chap who brought one down to Battleford. There was no railway through Battleford in those days. I know that, because in 1903 I walked from Lloydminster to Battleford and from Battleford to Saskatoon on the top of the railway dump, and it is 100 miles in each lap. I do know that I never enjoyed a walk more in my life, just a couple of hundred miles before breakfast.

I know of one man who is still confined in one of our mental institutions. He is a very old man now. He had a prisoner and he travelled for five and a half days with him. The only thing he could do was to handcuff him to himself. He arrived in Battleford. That was before North Battleford was ever heard of. In those days Battleford was a police post. I could give you instance after instance of which I have personal knowledge.

I know that the heads of the proper departments will be sympathetic, but I ask them not to treat it as a difficulty which cannot be overcome because of interference in some larger plan. It is not a part of a larger plan if we regard these men as having given not civil but military service to our country, which they have been giving from the days of the Riel rebellion. You can take the whole history of this country, and their major service has been that of maintaining law and order. The country was not as civilized then as it is now when every time a person puts out his hand and does a nickel's worth of work for himself he asks for ten cents from the government. Many of us are getting into that habit. Thanks very much; I will accept a retainer at any moment from any member of the government.

I do say with the greatest respect and deference that those of these men who are still alive, and who are in the Belcher hospital in Calgary or some place like that, should be allowed to live out their last days in comfort and, having eaten a sausage for breakfast, not worry whether they should or should not have saved half of it for their dinner that night.