

Supply—Veterans Affairs

Mr. Mitchell: I will give my definition of a psychiatrist. It is just an excuse for sin.

Mr. Blackmore: The minister could not have made a finer contribution to my case than he made in that remark. The conclusion I have arrived at is that psychiatrists have come to be a synonym for sinners in the Department of Veterans Affairs. I say that what the doctor has said utterly side-stepped any idea of the truth. I am not advocating that facts pertaining to the lives of these soldiers should be exposed, but I do contend that, if soldiers' service records have been tampered with or falsified, that can be proved without revealing any unsightly facts in their lives. If a psychiatrist has diagnosed a soldier's case pre-enlistment when that should never have been done, you can expose that without exposing any unsightly thing in the soldier's life. That is all I am asking for. I do think that this committee and the country and the sixty-two men involved are entitled to have these matters cleared up.

Mr. Gregg: Mr. Chairman, I do not propose to follow the hon. member for Lethbridge, but he asked a number of questions as appear in *Hansard* of June 30, 1948, which he says I have not covered.

Mr. Blackmore: I did not say a word about those questions. The minister must be wandering in his mind.

Mr. Gregg: I understood that in the early part of his remarks the hon. member quoted *Hansard* of June 30, 1948, that is his own speech, when he asked certain questions which he wanted the minister to reply to.

Mr. Blackmore: I did not say a word about those questions.

Mr. Gregg: The reasons why I have not answered them to date were given more fully and better by the hon. member for Lanark than I could possibly do. Across Canada there are something like 10,000 men and women who have been seriously broken or damaged in either world war I or world war II, some of them mentally, some of them physically, and some of them suffering a combination of both. Under no circumstances will I be a party to publishing in the records of this house intimate departmental details on the mental and physical condition of individual veterans, giving their regimental numbers and names, as was done in the *Hansard* I have referred to.

I realize that hon. members must bring up individual cases from time to time, in a hypothetical way, in order to prove their argument to establish a principle. We welcome that. But as the hon. member for Lanark so well said, there are none of us who would want the record of our son, our

daughter, our brother or our sister spread on the pages of *Hansard*. In the next breath I want to say that ever since I came to the department I have continuously offered to the hon. member for Lethbridge complete access to the records for his personal and confidential information. He has been free to discuss with the medical men of the department any point he might care to when investigating these cases.

The hon. member asks me what I am going to do about the sixty-two cases about which that gallant gentleman, Walter Kirchner, has complained in British Columbia. I will tell him what I did about a few of them. When I was in British Columbia I went to see them. I came into a certain hotel in the Okanagan valley on a June night at about one o'clock and I found in the lobby of the hotel one of these men to whom the hon. member for Lethbridge referred two years ago. We sat down and talked about his past. What I am doing, what my department is doing, what the medical men and the administrative people are doing is to make sure that the utmost care and attention is given to these sixty-two patients of the department as well as the other 10,000 seriously hurt whom we have to care for.

In regard to these particular cases I am sure it is unnecessary to remind my hon. friend that the mere fact of their circumstances having been noised abroad in this house is a deterrent to their recovery. I do not mind his criticism regarding the McCann commission, and I am sure if the Minister of National Revenue were here he would not mind it any more than the hon. member for Lanark did a little while ago, except that he would want to express his point of view just as forcibly as did his professional colleague. When cases are brought to the attention of the house, as the hon. member for Lethbridge has done—I am grateful to him for not doing it by naming the individuals today—the individuals concerned are placed under an unnecessary strain in their rehabilitation and recovery.

I do not propose to go back into the history before my tenure of office in an attempt to do the things which the hon. member for Lethbridge has suggested I should do. I believe that there are a group of members on all sides of the house from British Columbia who are quite able to express any complaints on the part of their constituents. I have not had from any one of the nine or ten ex-servicemen who make up the British Columbia membership in this house any complaint or suggestion that the charges of persecution and other things made by the hon. member for Lethbridge had any basis