

At the time the committee was in session I had occasion to bring before them a matter so involved that it was impossible for them to deal with it to a finish within the time at their disposal. I therefore crave the indulgence of the House for a few moments while I bring the matter to the attention of hon. members. During the summer months of 1918 permission was granted—by whom or by what authority I have not up to the present time been able to ascertain—for the officer of a foreign country to come into Canada and recruit Canadian citizens for service with the French army in France. He succeeded in recruiting Canadian-born citizens to the number of 221, who were assembled at Niagara Falls and afterwards transferred to France, where they served in the French army from June, 1918, until January, 1921.

So far as I can learn, the Department of Militia and Defence has absolutely no record of these men. I have been endeavouring to have these men given the same consideration as members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force received at the hands of the Government, but without success. I am informed that these men were paid the magnificent sum of five cents per day while overseas. They returned only last January, almost penniless, almost in rags, and in very poor condition; in fact, some of them are broken down in health. I placed before the committee such evidence as I could obtain, but I feel sure that there is still further evidence to be obtained, and if the Militia Department and this committee will continue investigations on behalf of these men I am confident that they will be able to establish what I am desirous of establishing here to-day,—that these men are deserving of the same consideration as the men who went overseas in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, because many of them have informed me that they were given to understand at the time they enlisted in this Polish battalion that their service would be considered as of the same value and effect as though they had served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The reasons for their joining that particular battalion I need not discuss now. I am merely desirous of placing this matter before the House and the country to show that a foreign government was allowed during the war to enlist 221 Canadian-born citizens and take them overseas at a time when we were moving heaven and earth to secure recruits for our own service.

[Mr. Pedlow.]

In view of these facts, Mr. Speaker, I would move, if I am in order, that the following paragraph be added to the resolution that has been presented by the Pensions Committee:

That the Canadian-born citizens to the number of 221 who enlisted in the Polish battalion for service with the French army in France, and who did serve overseas from June 1918 to January 1921, shall be rated as enlisted men in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in regard to (a) pay and allowances, (b) war service gratuity and (c) pensions.

I might add one word further, that I have a complete list of names of the men from my own riding, with their military service record cards.

Mr. SPEAKER: This motion is not in order. The report of the Pensions Committee is before the House for concurrence or rejection. If the hon. member moves to refer the report back to the committee, with instructions, he will be quite in order.

Mr. PEDLOW: I am in the hands of the Chair in regard to a matter of that kind, as I am not conversant with what is the proper procedure.

Mr. BELAND: Is it not competent, Mr. Speaker, for any member to move that certain paragraphs be added to the report submitted?

Mr. SPEAKER: If it were a consequential amendment or a motion of that character it would be quite in order. The report of the committee, however, is before the House for consideration on a specific motion. I have no objection to altering the phraseology of this motion so as to put it in proper form and that is what I purpose doing.

It is moved in amendment by Mr. Pedlow, seconded by Mr. Truax:

That the said report be not now commended to the consideration of the Government but that it be referred back to the Special Committee on Pensions, Insurance and Re-establishment with instructions that it have power to amend the said report by adding thereto, the following words:—

“Canadian born citizens to the number of 221 who enlisted in the Polish Battalion for service with the French Army in France, and who did serve overseas from June 1918 to January 1921, shall be rated as enlisted men in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in regard to (a) pay and allowances, (b) war service gratuity and (c) pensions.

Hon. HUGH GUTHRIE (Minister of Militia): Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted just a word in reply to the remarks of my hon. friend from South Renfrew (Mr. Pedlow) in regard to the Polish regiment