

That is the position; in drawing attention to that error, which may be accidental or designed, I do so at this moment, before the agreement comes up for consideration, merely that the government may have opportunity to make it read in accordance with the statutes of the parliament of Canada and the imperial parliament as well. That is, I think, all I shall say about these matters, because the time will come for discussion in detail.

With respect to Ontario and Quebec, the government has been pleased to say that the water-power difficulties are not yet adjusted. I think I may venture to point out that the reference made to the supreme court, in the terms in which that reference was made, was futile and a waste of time and money. It is now some months since the judgment of the supreme court was delivered, and surely some progress should be made in dealing with the difficulties that have arisen regarding water-powers between Ontario and Quebec and the federal authority. This responsibility rests with the administration of the day, and should it be said that we have in any sense embarrassed them in dealing with that problem, may I point out that we have expressed no opinions and have endeavoured so to conduct ourselves that the administration would have unembarrassed opportunity to deal with the situation. They have not done so, and I think that the common sense of the people of Canada asks why, with all these months that have elapsed, this matter is no nearer solution so far as our records are concerned than it was when the first reference was made to the Supreme Court of Canada.

We now come to a matter which I hoped would never be disputatious but which, unfortunately, the Minister of Pensions and National Health (Mr. King) has made disputatious. I refer to pensions to returned men. I was in Chilliwack last summer and a returned soldier came to me with a letter signed by the Minister of Pensions and National Health in which the minister said he was sorry he could not do better for him because of the opposition of Mr. Stevens, Mr. Bennett and others on the opposite side of the house. I saw that letter and there are other letters I saw at other places.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I should be very glad to have that letter.

Mr. BENNETT: You will get it. We endeavoured in this house to have the matter of soldiers' pensions arising out of the great war free from partisan controversy. May I remind the hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Gray), who took such credit to his

administration for the pensions law, that it was not this government that made that law; it was a former Conservative administration that set up the department. It is true we have established new machinery, and the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Crerar) was very desirous of assisting, while a member of the Union government, in making that machinery more perfect. It was a difficult problem with which to deal and we have from time to time appointed a committee of this house, usually consisting of returned men, to deal with it in a non-controversial and non-partisan manner. My friend from Quebec West (Mr. Power) has been chairman of the committee on more than one occasion, and he will say that since I have been in the position I now occupy I rose in my place when the report was submitted and said that if the returned men had unanimously arrived at conclusions with respect to these matters, they should have the support of those who sit to the left of the speaker. Then in 1927, when I felt very strongly about the matter because of the cases with which I had to deal, I urged the government to insert a new clause, as section 4, by which it would be provided that the returned man would receive the benefit of the doubt, and further that for the purposes of the Pension Act the disability on discharge of an applicant for pension who actually served in the theatre of war should, in the absence of misrepresentation or concealment on enlistment, be conclusively presumed to be attributable to military service. In other words, when a man was passed by the doctors as being fit for service and came back disabled after service, it should be conclusively presumed that the disablement was referable to military service in the theatre of war. That was voted down. My friends opposite voted it down, and I commend my friend from West Lambton to a perusal of pages 545-547 of the journals of this house of 13th April, 1927, where the record will show that his predecessor in this house voted against the proposed section to which I have just alluded. I am of the opinion that the view I held at the time was correct, and I still adhere to the soundness of that view. A man who served in the theatre of war, who was passed as fit into the line, and came back disabled should receive the benefit of the doubt. The country should be estopped and precluded from saying that the disability was not referable to the service he gave to his country. I hope that we may still be able to prepare a measure that will commend itself unanimously to this house. I have no doubt