

Pension Act

physically. He looked quite strong. He spent four or five years over there sleeping in the mud and facing all sorts of difficulties. No one can say that a man who lived that sort of life for four or five years would be normal physically when he came back. Such a case is worthy of consideration. I have another case of a man who enlisted in the first year of the last war. He was a barber. He received a bullet through his right hand and was granted \$100. I made many complaints for this man; I have a thick file of correspondence but that is all he got.

On the other hand, there are many men who received pensions and who do not deserve them. There should be a check-up. I admit that this would be a most unpopular measure, but it is necessary. This country is not rich enough to be able to afford to pay pensions to men who do not deserve them, when there are, on the other hand, deserving cases in which pensions should be granted.

I have many other cases about which I have written to the Department of National Defence. I know of one young man who enlisted voluntarily and who, I believe, went to Valcartier. Last fall he suffered an attack of bronchial pneumonia. He did not receive the attention he should have received, according to what a medical doctor, a member of the department, said in Quebec city. Since Christmas I have been corresponding with the Department of National Defence in an effort to get some satisfactory answer.

This man has been sent from pillar to post. He was not looked after as he should have been, and I am always told that the Department of National Defence has received no answer from the Department of Pensions and National Health. I do not blame the minister for this; I blame the Tory asses who are under him and who will not give a satisfactory answer when a soldier is suffering. That is shameful. I do not want to see anyone suffer unjustly, especially a soldier who has defended or is defending this country.

This is my first point. I have never written the minister about this, but as soon as I am through I shall send him the name of this man and I want an answer to-morrow. I want to know who is guilty in this business. Of course, sometimes this chamber is a pink tearoom, we cannot say anything, we have no freedom of speech. We are making what is called an "attack" on the great medical geniuses of the Department of Pensions and National Health. Most of them are asses, yes, asses; a-s-s-e-s. No satisfaction is given to the soldier by these people who get such fat salaries. It is a great scandal and I hope the minister will clean out this Augean stable.

[Mr. Pouliot.]

I mean the Department of Pensions and National Health. The manure has become health. It is a shame, and no one can defend it. I shall have more to say about this in due course and will give names. I suppose no answer will be given, or it will be said that the industrious leaders, the asses, have decided that this fellow was not deserving of a pension. I want to speak freely and there is no one in this committee to prevent me from saying what I am here to say. My people are satisfied with me. They are proud of me and they want justice.

There is something else, perhaps on a different line. This has to do with certain absurdities in the statute, one being the preference granted, not only to the returned men who served in the Canadian forces but to those who served in the allied armies, that is, the armies of Italy, Japan, the United States, France and so on. This preference is granted to those who served in the forces of those countries which signed the Versailles treaty on the same side as Great Britain. With one exception, Canada is the only country which has granted such a preference. The only exception is the state of Maine in the United States, where certain preference was given to Canadian veterans. But that preference was repealed long ago; it exists no more.

Some years ago I was the sponsor of a bill to repeal the "allied preference" given by Canada. I did not insist upon the bill being considered because a member of the government told me that it was the intention of the government to dispense with this so-called preference. But what happened? A civil service committee sat during one whole session and one of the conclusions reached was that this preference should be taken away from the veterans of the allied armies, if they had not resided in Canada before the war of 1914-18. I see in this committee certain members who sat on that committee and they will remember that no action was taken. Another committee met the following year and made exactly the same recommendation, but that recommendation is still on the shelf exposed to dust or moisture, depending upon whether the weather is dry or damp. That is what happened.

The first thing to be done is to repeal this preference. But there is another thing also. Why was this preference granted to the returned men of the last war? It was granted because the Borden-Bennett government did not keep their promises to the soldiers. A lot of foolish promises were made by Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues to the returned men. They were told