

Supply—Pensions and National Health

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Last year, \$17,593.34.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: How many pensioners does that cover?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): It covers thirty-one disability, and six dependent, a total of thirty-seven.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Is any similar pension being paid to veterans of the Boer war?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Their pensions, I am informed, are paid by the British Ministry of Pensions and not by the Canadian Ministry of Pensions.

Item agreed to.

Pensions branch.

476. Pensions branch administration—further amount required, \$123,371.

Mr. GILLIS: I was looking for an item covering A.R.P. work.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): That was covered by the war appropriation measure which we discussed before the Easter recess. The hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) had asked me if I would make a statement with regard to it, and on that occasion I made a lengthy statement, and we discussed the matter for half a day before the Easter recess. There is no money here for A.R.P. That is purely war expenditure.

Mr. GILLIS: I should like one point clarified. I understand that there are legal entanglements tying up the question of whose is the responsibility for air raid precautions work. The minister will remember that I have corresponded with him on the question of the camouflage of a tank at New Waterford. After going to the department of pensions I was referred to the provincial government, and the provincial government said that they had no authority to take action in the matter, and that I should see National Defence. National Defence in that area made a pronouncement upon it, but the fact is that those who have made a decision in the matter do not know exactly what it is all about. I have received a long joint resolution from those in charge of A.R.P. work. There is a large water tank at New Waterford, and it stands 600 feet high. It is only 300 yards from the Atlantic ocean, and being painted with aluminum paint it can be seen 100 miles out at sea when all that section is blacked out. The attitude taken by those who say, "we cannot do anything about it", is that this is simply a matter of a water tank; but the real danger is that this tank, shining with aluminum paint and being visible 100 miles out to sea, would

[Mr. Castleden.]

be a pilot-light to the enemy which might result in the destruction of the entire town. It is such a small matter to repaint the tank, and if it is not done the whole island of Cape Breton is in jeopardy. As it is, the tank stands out as a good aiming post.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): If I may be permitted, the question of camouflage is definitely not within the purview of the minister responsible for A.R.P., but I can assure the hon. member that this matter has been very carefully discussed by the war committee in the last few weeks, and certain steps have been taken which I do not feel at liberty to discuss in the house. The jurisdiction is divided between the Department of Munitions and Supply, with reference to certain plants, and the Department of National Defence, with reference to certain areas. I shall be very glad to inform my hon. friend privately as to what has been done and what is being done.

Mr. GILLIS: Thank you.

Mr. MacINNIS: I think most members of parliament have received numerous letters from organizations representing widows of veterans of the last war. I have had at least twenty-five or thirty letters during the session. I would ask the minister if it is likely that consideration will be given to giving a pension to these women.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I answered that earlier this afternoon, but I will repeat briefly what I said. Last year the pensions committee of this house made two alternative recommendations. The first was to grant pensions to widows of those pensioned in the great war regardless of the amount of their disability—the widows of pensioners of 50 per cent disability are automatically pensioned subject to certain conditions. The other alternative was to continue pensions to the widows of recipients of war veterans' allowance. Upon consideration we felt that it would be injurious to the essential principle of both acts to effect any redress in the direction indicated at that time. If my hon. friend will look at the resolution passed by the Canadian legion in Winnipeg about three weeks ago he will find that they have suggested an alternative remedy which is to apply to the non-pensioned widows the principle of compassionate pensions, as the committee proposed last year as applied to those not otherwise eligible in the present war. That matter is being considered. What the decision will be, I am not in a position to state at the present moment.

Item agreed to.