

Then it is interesting to note that in 1920 for some reason or other the insurance principle was repealed and a man to obtain a pension had to prove that his disability was attributable to service. Apparently discussion continued in regard to which system would prevail, and again in 1921 the repeal of the insurance principle was confirmed. Then, in 1922, the Act again came up for amendment, and the insurance principle was restored in so far as it affected members of the expeditionary force who served in a theatre of war. Apparently in 1922 it was decided that the insurance principle would prevail in so far only as it affected men who had been in an actual theatre of war. This must have given rise to considerable discussion for at that time the Ralston commission was appointed and by the Act passed in 1923 not only were the provisions of the insurance principle as enacted in 1919 restored, but the section was amended to practically the same form in which it exists to-day.

As I read the history of the legislation it seems to me that it is continued down to the present time, that the insurance principle has prevailed. True, more consideration has been given to the man who served overseas than the man who has only served at home. Now, when this war broke out immediately an order in council was passed giving the same benefits to all the men who enlisted in this war. The government, apparently, did not wait until the war was actually declared, because I notice the order in council was passed on the 2nd of September, 1939; but on the 21st of May, 1940, that order in council was rescinded and a new order in council was passed conferring the benefits of the insurance principle only upon those who served in a theatre of war, or outside of Canada.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that this is to a certain extent a retrogressive step. With respect to this war we do not know yet whether it is going to come much closer to home than was the case in the last war. We do know that the men who are enlisting to-day are all being examined very carefully. They are all being taken into the army on the understanding that if necessary they will fight overseas or they will fight at home. Now, as the Act stands at the present time, if a man happens to be not directly attending to his military duties and some injury befalls him, no consideration is given to him in regard to pension; if he is killed, no consideration is given to his wife. I have a case in the city of Brantford; I will not refer to names, but it is that of a young man who enlisted in the last war and served his country in France in the last war. Now, there is no doubt about it, Mr. Chairman, that that man served in an actual theatre of war, and he served gallantly. When he returned to Canada he joined the militia. He has been a sergeant in the rifle regiment in the city of Brantford ever since demobilization from the last war, and now when this war comes along that man enlists again. He was an instructor at Camp Borden. He received a few days leave and returned to his home in Brantford. Returning to the camp on a Sunday night, when a few miles from Camp Borden he was in an automobile accident with the result that he died a few weeks later from the effects of the injuries he received in that motor accident. His widow applies for pension. It is refused because it has been ruled that the man was not on military service and the result of his death was not directly attributable to military service. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, even on the present legislation, that that is a narrow interpretation of the Act; because this Act, as it now stands, does give the insurance principle to a man who has seen service in an actual theatre of war. I go back to this war veteran who, as I said before, gave gallant service to his country in the last war, who did see service in an actual theatre of war, who is killed in Canada when he is returning to his duty and whose wife is told that she cannot get a pension. I think that is a severe hardship.

Some Hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

[Brigadier-General H. F. McDonald.]