

The Committee thought it would be of value to obtain the opinion of the Canadian Legion in this connection and a letter from the Dominion Command of the Legion reads as follows:—

In reply to your letter of January 22nd, may I say that the Legion believes that the Veterans' Bureau has functioned admirably. The proposal to have the Veterans' Bureau administered by a Commission has not caused any strong opinion one way or another to be expressed by our Commands and Branches. It is a very long time since we had any serious complaints registered regarding the operation of the Veterans' Bureau. The independent operation of the Veterans' Bureau in its function of advocate does not appear to have been seriously affected because of its present status. On the other hand, of course, the Legion wishes a Pensions Advocate to have all the freedom that an advocate should have, and would certainly seek a remedy if departmental relationships became restrictive.

Section 11

MISCONDUCT

A. Amending Discharge Certificates.

B. Granting of post-discharge benefits other than under The War Service Grants Act, 1944.

The Special Committee of the House of Commons on Veterans Affairs of 1945 had recommended the constitution of a Board of Review to consider the propriety, or otherwise, of payment of the benefits under The War Service Grants Act (i.e., War Service Gratuity and Re-establishment Credit) to a veteran discharged for misconduct and, if indicated, to direct that the veteran shall receive such benefits.

After the Special Committee had so recommended, a subcommittee of the Special Committee considered the problem further and concluded its report to the main Committee as follows:—

Your subcommittee feels that it should logically follow that, as the worth of the member's service has been decided to be the predominating factor, no further disability in the way of obtaining employment and rehabilitation should follow on account of any entry on the discharge sheet, and so RECOMMENDS — THAT in all cases where the Board of Review has made an order granting gratuities, the discharge sheets shall be automatically referred back to the Service concerned for amendment of the cause of discharge to read:— "Free to take up civilian occupation."

The three Deputy Ministers of National Defence were invited to comment upon the recommendation of the subcommittee and, speaking for the three Services, the Deputy Minister (Army) stated that it was the considered opinion of the Department that it should not be mandatory for the Service to alter the discharge certificate in cases where payment of gratuity was ordered by the Board of Review but, rather, that the Service concerned should retain a discretionary power to determine the stated cause of discharge to appear on all discharge certificates. The Deputy Minister suggested that the position of incorrigibles who had been of little or no use to the Service during the war must be kept in the proper relation to personnel who rendered long and good service.

At December 31, 1945, the total discharges were:—

Army	396,149
Navy	66,682
Air Force	166,020