

show that before 1918 they were not of age and consequently they had to wait until that time arrived before enlisting.

Mr. CURRIE: Just one of them.

Mr. VIEN: But in any case they objected to being commanded by any other officer than their own national.

Mr. CURRIE: What country did they swear allegiance to when they joined?

Mr. VIEN: That question is irrelevant and I do not think I should be called upon to answer it; it would raise very intricate and very far-reaching issues. The point I wish to bring to the attention of the House is this: They are Canadian citizens, they are Canadian born, they did not enlist until 1918—some of them because they were not of age, and others because they objected to being commanded by anybody but their own commander. But as soon as a Polish regiment was organized they enlisted in it, and if the Canadian Government had taken the initiative of organizing a Polish regiment in this country they would just as readily have enlisted in that regiment within the Canadian Expeditionary Force, as they did in a regiment under the French Government. I do not believe that Canadian-born citizens of Polish origin who voluntarily enlisted in that Polish regiment should be treated differently from Canadian citizens who enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Considering the reservists of other nationalities who went back because they were subject to the laws of their own countries I say there is a clean distinction to be made between their case and that of these men. In the former case the country to which those reservists returned and in whose regiments they enlisted, provided for them if they were disabled. In the case of these Canadian-born citizens of Polish origin, however, no country but Canada can provide for them if they were disabled in the war. It is therefore only just and fair that we should extend to these men the same benefits as are enjoyed by Canadian citizens who enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer): I must confess this is a question which is a little delicate. It has presented some difficulties to my own mind, but after giving careful ear to the discussion and thinking as well as I am able, my disposition is to support the recommendations of the committee. In doing that, perhaps I may be permitted, in a sentence, to repeat the admiration

which I have expressed for the splendid work which has been done by this committee from time to time, and especially by its most worthy chairman. Our duty in this House is to Canadians and, especially in connection with the subject that we are dealing with, to the Canadian soldiers. That is true, and that point has been very strongly urged by my hon. friend who has just sat down and the preceding speakers. But there were Canadians who, in the first place, according to the very clear statement of the Minister of Militia (Mr. Guthrie) were a little tardy in their action in regard to the fighting—they were in no hurry to enlist. Of course, my hon. friend has said, until there was a Compulsory Service Act they had that freedom. But that does not prevent our backing our judgment by the fact in their case.

Then the second fact in regard to these particular Canadians which has far more weight with me than their tardiness in seeing the need of fighting, was that when they did fight they voluntarily took themselves out of the position of being Canadian soldiers. They had the option to fight with their comrades in the Canadian ranks, and they voluntarily used that option to remove themselves from the Canadian banners, and whether they did it for sentiment or any other cause, my mind is influenced by the consideration that they took that course of action.

Now, it has been said that they are few in number. Well, I do not see that that affects the principle of the case. But there is this to bear in mind in that connection, as my hon. friend from North Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt) has pointed out, that if we differ from the committee's recommendation in this particular case it appears fairly certain that the door would be open to other applications which could appeal to us with equal strength on the grounds of sentiment. I have the utmost respect for those who are ruled by sentiment, but it frequently happens in this life that we have to bring reinforcements from the head to hold our hearts in check, so to speak.

I ask myself, of course, the question here which I do in regard to every proposed public expenditure: Where is the money coming from? It must be a question which the House is tired of my putting, but I am going to put it in regard to as many subjects as it needs to be put. Now, the obvious answer in this case is that the money would be provided to some extent by thousands of returned men who are