

Supply—Veterans Affairs

Columbia and Vancouver, particularly, might well be proud of the hospital and of the staff as it was at the time of the inspection.

I am not going to argue this question. I think it is more important to go to the committee on old age security at four o'clock than to stay here arguing this case; but I again call your attention to the fact that I would not want any relative of mine, who is a veteran in any hospital—I would not want his case to be paraded before the country whether he has to suffer from some form of psychosis; nor would I want his physical disability to be paraded before the whole country. In this I think laymen will be forced to recognize—and I think they will approve of it—that doctors have some degree of honour. I am just as much interested in the veterans as is any member of this house because—and I say this without any degree of, let us say, blowing—my family has been intimately connected with both wars. My son was a patient in the veterans hospital for two years after he came back. I am proud of the surgery, of the work and treatment that were given him. It was of the very best. I have no criticism to make. When I have a criticism to make of the Department of Veterans Affairs I will let them have it from the shoulder, but I am not going to be a party to any criticism involving myself as a medical member of that committee.

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Chairman, it is quite obvious now that while everything the doctor says is completely reliable he has once more completely sidestepped the issue. Let me mention once more the fact that the charges were falsification of documents.

Mr. Blair: It was all looked into.

Mr. Blackmore: Why was no report given on that? You do not need to parade a man's personal and private affairs before anybody in order to prove whether or not his documents were falsified.

Mr. Blair: No.

Mr. Blackmore: There is no reference whatsoever to the question of felonious behaviour by psychiatrists in falsely diagnosing the condition of nerves of a young man, attributing his condition of nerves to a pre-enlistment condition, by calling it mental, whereas it should be attributed probably to something that occurred in service. You do not have to show any unsightly facts about a man's history in order to probe into these two problems, and these are the two problems which were specifically mentioned before the minister of veterans affairs, Mr. Mackenzie, on July 16, 1947. The doctor, however, has sidestepped the whole thing.

[Mr. Blair.]

If Walter Kirchner made the charges against the Shaughnessy hospital and the doctors of the Department of Veterans Affairs I have never heard him do it, and I have heard pretty nearly everything that Walter Kirchner had to say for years because I worked with him. Anyway, these are not the things that Mr. Mackenzie said would be looked into. What I want to know is why in the world this commission was not set up to look into those things that Mr. Quelch and Mr. Bentley dealt with in the house on July 16? Why was it not set up to look into those things and why did it not do it?

The next important thing is this: I agree with the doctor that in the life of probably a good many soldiers there are many many things we would not have exposed to view; yet because of our reticence in this particular thing we leave the way open for the grossest kind of abuse of privileges on the part of nefarious men who as officials will deliberately falsify the records of a soldier in order to deprive him of his pension. There is no doubt in the world that that sort of thing has been done. There is no doubt in the world, as far as my information goes, that psychiatrists have been guilty of diagnosing a case pre-enlistment when it should never have been pre-enlistment. What I want to know is whether these two abuses were found in the records of these sixty-two men.

Mr. Martin: The doctor dealt with that.

Mr. Blackmore: The doctor did not say a thing about that.

Mr. Martin: Yes, he said that was examined.

Mr. Blackmore: The doctor said not a word about that.

Mr. Martin: Yes, he did.

Mr. Blackmore: The report does not detail anything in that respect.

Mr. Martin: He said that was looked into.

Mr. Blackmore: Let us get the record completely straight. The doctor did not say a word about the psychiatrists. No, what he said—

Mr. Mitchell: What is a psychiatrist?

Mr. Blackmore: I wish we all knew.

An hon. Member: You should know.

Mr. Blackmore: I do not intend to get sidetracked now, not for a minute. If the minister does not know what a psychiatrist is, there is a dictionary in the library and he may go and look at it.