

should not be prejudiced by any expression of opinion in its report. Had time allowed the committee might have attempted to secure through the larger soldier organizations a considered decision on this question, but as this was impossible the suggestion is made that the Government should confer with these organizations and adopt some method of obtaining the view of the men.

In closing may I be allowed to thank my fellow-members of the committee for their attendance at its many meetings and for the assistance and encouragement given to its chairman. I am well aware our protracted sessions frequently interfered with other parliamentary duties, but it is fortunate for the cause in which we are all interested that other matters were put to one side, and as a result we had a wonderfully high average of sustained attendance; a condition which the members of the House will recognize contributes much to informed discussion and proper judgment.

Were I personally disposed to begrudge the time spent on the work of the committee it would be upon the sole ground that its call for continued attention has been so absorbing as to debar me from keeping abreast of the general programme before the House. To such an extent has that condition persisted that for two months or more it might fairly be said that the city of London was not represented in the House of Commons.

It has been the custom and practice of the committees on soldiers' affairs with which I have had the privilege to be associated to refrain from expression of sentiment, and on the surface at least to deal with all questions before them in that more equable atmosphere which leads to juster conclusions. After all "deeds not words" is a fitting motto for those who deal in matters of war.

I hesitate to break this tradition although my Celtic ancestry makes me perhaps less sensitive than those of sterner mould in publicly voicing one's inmost thoughts.

Lest, however, those whose requests we have been compelled to deny—and I am aware we have perforce had to refuse many such—should be inclined to call in question our attitude, let me assure them that I speak but the bare truth when I say that the committee's watchwords were "generosity and justice," and that the greater of these was generosity.

A few months ago it was my great fortune to travel a portion of the battlefields of Belgium and Northern France. This visit enabled me to comprehend more clearly

something of what our men did and suffered. It will cause the trench-hardened warrior to laugh, to think that even the most vivid imagination could reconstruct anything to approach actuality. That is doubtless so, but as the child is impressed by a wreck-strewn shore and can vaguely visualize the storm which produced it, so may we, the inexperienced, gain a glimpse of the terrible reality by viewing the aftermath of war's cyclonic rage. After passing through countless ruined towns, deserts of brick and stone so slowly being restored, we stood in that horrid plain which lies beyond the town of Ypres. At the sight of that desolate morass, churned and pock-marked by shell-holes, whereon naught grew but dun rushes and tangled masses of creepers whose thorns rivalled the barbs of the rusting wire through which they struggled, without note of bird or other sound of animal life—naught, indeed, but "the little children of the wind crying solitary in lonely places"—with the horizon outlined by the ghastly and ghostly fingers of dead and riven trees; I was able to gain some faint idea of the stuff our men were made of when for months under far more appalling conditions than I could outline they not only fought and defeated the enemy but withstood the terror that flew by night and the pestilence that walked at noonday.

Then, Sir, I recalled the lines, penned half a century since but still apposite to our times:

I with uplifted head salute the sacred dead
Who went—and who return not? Say not so,
Virtue hath paths that lead not to the grave,
No ban of endless night exiles the brave,
And, to the saner mind, we rather seem the
 dead who stayed behind.

And on that spot with these words in my mind, I strongly resolved that we who, through age or other giant circumstance were debarred from taking part in the actual struggle, should by such puny sacrifice of effort or funds as we can offer prove at least that we are alive to the debt we owe to those who fought and died.

Mr. I. E. PEDLOW (South Renfrew):
Mr. Speaker, I rise in the first place to offer my hearty congratulations to the chairman (Mr. Cronyn) and his committee on the report which has just been presented to the House. It is undoubtedly the result of an immense amount of careful, painstaking work on their part, and I extend to them sincere thanks not only on behalf of the members of this House but also on behalf of the men whom they have been so greatly interested in.