

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

The evidence reviewed by your committee reveals the fact that the civil re-establishment of former members of the Forces in Canada has not been undertaken in a manner which would equitably provide all such persons with a reasonable opportunity to overcome handicaps inflicted upon them by reason of active service.

Some progress has been made, but existing rehabilitation measures have failed to provide for the dire necessity of large numbers who, consequently, are unable to compete successfully in commercial and industrial activities during the economic aftermath of the war, and, therefore, cannot regain a desirable standard of citizenship. Moreover, further provision for the needs of the dependents of deceased soldiers and the totally disabled is of paramount importance.

As submitted in the evidence, the present pensionschedule merely provides the dependents of the deceased soldiers with the bare necessities of life and does not bridge the diminished earning capacity of the disabled man. Adequate provision has not yet been made for those whose physical and mental condition does not warrant active medical treatment, yet who are unable to obtain a decent livelihood. The War Service Gratuity was distributed in such a way that usually those in greatest need of re-establishment received the least amount. The immediate benefits of the Soldier Settlement Act are confined almost exclusively to those of previous agricultural experience and who have the required capital. Vocational Training is conferred upon a comparatively small number of men, and, as administered, does not ensure reasonable chances of success to the disabled student in his vocation. Unemployment is manifest and does not offer prospects of amelioration during the next few months. An alarming number of returned soldiers are engaged in casual employment, and the facilities for the discovery of desirable employment opportunities are inadequate and lack efficient co-ordination. Canadians who served in the Imperial Forces are debarred from complete participation in Canada's post-war benefits. Dependents who returned to Canada from England prior to the Armistice are under disadvantage as compared to those repatriated subsequent to the Armistice. Disabled men frequently cannot obtain life insurance because of disabilities contracted on service, and relief in respect to housing has not been made generally available to returned soldiers. It is, therefore, submitted that the concrete results actually achieved in re-establishment are not in reasonable proportion to the existing needs.

Briefly, the further requirements of re-establishment, as disclosed by the present enquiry, may be summarized as follows:

(a) A generous standard of maintenance for the dependents of deceased soldiers and the totally disabled, commensurate at all times with the cost of living, and coupled with suitable educational opportunities for the children of such soldiers.

(b) Adequate provision for all those disabled on service, which would ensure restoration to a maximum of usefulness with permanent placement in the commercial, agricultural or industrial life of the community, under administration of sufficient elasticity to provide for individual requirements.

(c) Special restorative care for those of weakened mentality and general physical debilitation due to war service, with the removal of all cause for financial worry.

(d) Life insurance facilities for disabled men debarred from the benefits of ordinary life insurance, enabling them to safeguard the future of their dependents.