

8-9 GEORGE V, A. 1918

that the family got that cheque. Could not an arrangement be perfected some way or other between our branches and the department so that in a case like that we could treat with the men. I thought perhaps that provision might be made in the new Bill that would safeguard it, but the returned soldiers are being hurt in the opinions of the general public by the fact of men who are returned soldiers committing fraud; we are quite fed up with it.

*By Hon. Mr. McCurdy:*

Q. Your idea is that the Militia Department would take up such cases where officers and men contract bills with boarding-house keepers, and go away without meeting them. How can they meet that difficulty?—A. I know lots of people were taken in that way, and have not got a cent up to the present day. But I do not say that of all Canadian officers and men, they are not a bunch of rogues, but that is what a good many people say about the returned soldiers. There have been a good many who have skipped their bills. We are up against that problem; there are men who commit fraud, and just because a man is a returned soldier when he comes up in court the judge usually immediately turns him loose, or he will get thirty days. That does not mean anything, where we could perhaps take hold of that man and straighten him up.

Q. Have you any suggestion to put forward?—A. I think if we could get that man's pension cheque in a case like that, we could induce him to pay up. He would have to endorse the cheque, and we have branches all over Canada, and some branches are being started in the United States now and we might perhaps arrange with him so that he would come over on his cheque and pay off a widow to whom he owes money for board. I just want you to think about it, because this has become a very serious matter.

Witness retired.

The committee adjourned.