

members of the forces and their dependents except section 25, which the Committee of the Senate struck out during the previous proceedings. The other amendments are very largely a matter of words, and I think are not the subject of very general agitation.

Now, as to section 25, dealing with the pensions to widows, I read in one of the newspapers to-day the statement—I do not know on what authority it is made—that a large appropriation submitted to the other House in the Supplementary Estimates was for the purpose of paying to dependents of soldiers the moneys that they expected to get under the Pension Act as passed by the House of Commons. I say without fear of contradiction that the action now recommended to the Senate with regard to section 25 will almost totally deprive those dependents of any of that large sum of money; that this section adopted to-day is an absolute blank so far as any effect is concerned.

The only two paragraphs added to the law as it stands at present are these:

No pension shall be paid

(a) Unless the injury in respect of which he was pensioned or entitled to pension would not shorten his expectancy of life.

That is wholly a matter of opinion, to be decided not by any independent authority, but wholly by the Board of Pension Commissioners. Those of us who have had to deal with the Board of Pension Commissioners, and who know the nature of their decisions when there is any possibility for dispute, will recognize that that paragraph (a) is absolutely valueless to every person.

Paragraph (b), the only other section of this handsome gift offered to the widows of ex-soldiers, says:

Unless he was not chronically ill of a pensionable disease and not in receipt of pension in respect thereof.

As to that, I say it also is absolutely valueless because of the nature of the proceedings before the Pension Board. When a soldier comes up now and reports a disability and asks for a pension in respect of it, he is invariably challenged to connect up the disability with his active service. The man will go back over the intervening years, and he will say: "It is true I didn't report that when I left, and there is nothing in my papers about it; but I have been suffering from those symptoms more or less ever since." And they will question him and say: "The first year you were out did you suffer?" Well, that is a long time ago, and as man's memory is frail, and the desire to establish the claim

to a pension is keen, he will naturally say: "Yes, I think I did." "And you did the second year, and the third?" "Yes." "And you really think you connect it up with your service?" "Yes."—and he gets his pension. Then he dies, and when he dies they read this section, and they say: "Why, he thinks he had those symptoms immediately after his discharge,"—and there is no pension coming to the widow. I do not think that is fair treatment to soldiers.

Now, I do not know how far I am privileged to refer to proceedings in Committee. If I am out of order, I would quite willingly be checked, because I have no desire to do anything contrary to the rules of this House. I think it is worth while to say this, however: that our Committee were tendered the olive branch from the House of Commons in the nicest and most pleasant way; there was no acrimonious dispute between the two bodies, but the House of Commons, through their accredited representatives, came to us with alternative sections to 25 in writing. They withdrew their demand that we restore the section as it was before, and said, "We will be satisfied if you put these in." Now, the sections so submitted provided something very substantial for the soldiers: they had all the safeguards of this resolution against what they called "moribund marriages", but they contained in addition a recognition of the fulfilment of pre-war engagements. That is a subject with which we are very familiar, and it need hardly be explained that a great number of marriages occurred immediately following the release of soldiers from active service. In recognition of that a proviso was put in that no pension should be payable to the widow of a soldier unless she had married him before the coming into force of the Pension Act of 1919—that would be before the 1st of September, 1919—and that would have taken care of most of the pre-war engagements.

We are told about the extraordinary cost that might have been imposed upon the country if we had recognized these engagements. I would like to refer to the extraordinary cost that we are placing upon the individual by not recognizing them, and I state not a hypothetical case, but an actual case of a young soldier who enlisted in 1914, and who, after four years service being invalided in England with incipient tuberculosis, married there a girl to whom he had been engaged before he enlisted. The progress of the disease was checked sufficiently by the care he got in hospital and at home to enable him to survive ten years, during the greater part of which he was able to earn a more or less substantial living. He died last year. The

Hon. Mr. TAYLOR.