

*By Mr. Nickle:*

Q. Your contention is, I understand, that these men have been examined by various Medical Boards before and after enlistment and if there is disease present it has not been detected?—A. Yes, these men have been examined many times and nothing is found wrong with them. After being under the supervision of medical men representing the Government for many months, during which nothing has been developed by which the medical man can detect disability or disease in the soldier. When it comes to a question, months or years afterwards, as to the man's right to a pension, that man ought to be assumed to have been fit when he enlisted, and not as at the present time in at least ten per cent of the cases, have the man told by the Pension Board that his disability was the result of pre-enlistment causes. The Government is responsible for the appointment of these medical boards, and if these boards are efficient and do their duty, that man must have been fit when he was passed by them. We read recently that the Government were sending back 20,000 men from overseas because it has been found that they are unfit; if they are unfit they should never have been sent overseas. In the recruiting campaign in this country which was carried on for months and months, we went upon platforms all over the country, and part of our plan was to convince the men who had not enlisted that they were cowards and not as good as other men who had enlisted; in that way we were able to get a lot of men to come forward, and I know that during that campaign the members of the medical board who examined these recruits were paid a certain amount for each man they examined, and I am satisfied they passed a lot of men who ought never to have gone across. Now, after the man has been in hospital in England that man comes before the medical board and almost the first question he is asked is: "How do you feel?" Now, that man has been fed up in hospital, and after being there for months, the controlling desire of that man's heart is to get home, and when he is asked that question he immediately replies: "I feel fine, sir." In his anxiety to get home he is enthusiastic as to his condition and strength, and gives the medical board the impression that he has got all right again. Upon that man's statement given in this way the medical sheet is made out. Now, I contend that before the man is allowed to say anything he should be cautioned, and that these medical boards should not take the man's statement, but should give him a thorough examination because it is only natural to suppose that after having been fed up in hospital for a long period, the man feels stronger and better than he may really be; he may appear to be all right and there is apparently nothing wrong with him at that time, but I think that the report of the medical officers before whom he appears in England, made under the circumstances I have described, should not be taken by the board here, as final, as I suppose—I do not know officially that such is the case, but it seems to me that is what would be done, because the information has come to me time and time again that the medical advisers of this board here in Canada looking at the report from the English board, say, when the question comes before them as to the degree of disability which the man has suffered: "The man was all right four months ago, when he was examined in England, how can he be 60 per cent disabled now! I have known cases where the Board of Pension Commissioners have taken that stand, and I know too that those men are getting smaller pensions and that they are not getting compensated according to the disability they have suffered. Some of these men who were getting very small pensions cannot work and if they went to any business man for a job, those business men would find that it did not pay to hire them. I know men that are getting pensions of \$10 a month that are not worth that to anybody, these men cannot work, and they have incurred that disability through their service. We have had in the city of Ottawa nine men who died within the past few months, and some of them were not in receipt of pensions, yet they all died through disabilities caused by injuries received in the service. I do not believe you can be too careful in regard to granting pensions, but I think that some reliance should be placed upon the reports of these local medical

[Mr. Norman Knight.]