

opportunity to bring the matter properly before us, and my hon. friend from Beauce, who was a most popular member of the committee, certainly did his best for them. If he could not do anything for them, I do not believe any one else could.

Mr. THOMAS VIEN (Lotbinière): I am sorry I cannot see eye to eye with the hon. member (Mr. Nesbitt), who has just spoken. He says that these soldiers, for whom we are asking the sympathy of the House, do not appeal to him as much as the reservists of other countries who were forced to go to the front. I do not see how the hon. gentleman discriminates in his sympathy between those who were forced to go, and those who voluntarily enlisted. I always thought he was more sympathetic to those who voluntarily enlisted than to those who were compelled to join the forces. Leaving that aside, however, there is another consideration I wish to bring before the House, and which I think should receive some consideration in regard to those men on behalf of whom the hon. member for Renfrew has just made a motion. In the case of reservists of European countries, the soldiers who went back to their countries and enlisted in their national armies are provided for by the various governments for whom they served. These Polish soldiers who enlisted in this special voluntary Polish regiment are not looked after by the Polish Republic. If they are disabled, they do not receive any compensation or pension from the country of which they are nationals. There is a great distinction between a reservist who goes back to serve in his country, who cannot enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force because he is under orders from his own country to report there, and a Canadian-born citizen who is not forced to enlist and yet voluntarily enlists in a regiment which is specially organized for those of his own nationality. The Government of Canada allowed the French Government to come here and to organize a Polish regiment. If they had been recruited from among the Polish reservists I would grant immediately the argument I heard this afternoon from hon. gentlemen opposite, that they are on the same footing as reservists from all other countries. But this is not the case. They are not Polish reservists; they are Canadian-born citizens who were induced to enlist by the fact that the French Government organized a Polish regiment in Canada. It seems to me, therefore, that

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

there should be no difference between these men and those who enlisted voluntarily in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The hon. member for North Perth (Mr. Morphy) put a very reasonable question when he asked, "Why did they not enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force?" The answer to this question, I think, will throw some light on the subject. In the first place, if they had enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, the hon. gentleman who asked that question would concede, they would be entitled to a pension and, of course, they should be so entitled. But why did they not enlist in that force? It was because a Polish regiment was being organized in Canada, and they enlisted in it notwithstanding the fact that they were Canadian-born citizens who understood the English language. A question of sentiment is involved there which is only human and which everybody will understand. For example, when a French Canadian regiment was organized in the province of Quebec, French Canadians were induced to enlist in that regiment much more readily than they would have enlisted in any other organization. Therefore when a Polish regiment was raised in Canada it was only natural that the Canadian-born citizen of Polish descent should enlist in that regiment rather than in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. They were commanded by a Polish officer, and in France they were brigaded under a Polish general; and I believe that being Canadian-born citizens they should not be deprived, merely because they enlisted in the Polish regiment organized in this country, of the other advantages which the law provided for the Canadian-born citizen.

Mr. McGIBBON (Muskoka): Why did they wait from 1914 until 1918 to join that Polish regiment?

Mr. VIEN: Well, the hon. gentleman cannot blame any Canadian citizen for taking advantage of the law and exercising his judgment as to the proper time to enlist. This question has been already threshed out in this House and in the country. As long as the law of the land gave a Canadian citizen the right to enlist or not it was a matter subject to his own judgment or discretion.

Mr. LEMIEUX: And besides, they were not of age.

Mr. VIEN: As to that I do not know. We have the cards of some of them which