

House that those who knew me, knew that I was never in better health in my life, and I had been in good health for years previous to that. I raised this battalion, consisting of over 1,250 men, to full strength inside of sixty days. I was in training all winter and all of the next spring and summer. I took my battalion to camp Hughes early in May of 1916, and trained there until the latter days of August, before I had the slightest symptom of any trouble. That was, as you will see, ten months after I had enlisted. The inference to be drawn from the way the Citizen puts the case is that I had got some special treatment. I think it is unfair that the press of the country should take a fling at a man who has done his duty, because he is in public life, and make it appear that, either as a member of the other House or as a senator, I had got some special treatment. I do not think that a man should be penalized simply because he is a member of Parliament or a Senator.

With all due deference to what has been said in another place, I desire to emphasize the fact that I never asked for a pension; I never asked for a board; I never refused to be boarded a second time. What took place was this: I was ordered by the military authorities to report to a board in Ottawa. I forget the dates; they are immaterial. I reported to that board and was examined in order that it might be determined whether I should be retired or kept on leave. When I came back to Canada on the 25th of December, 1916, the first thing I did on my arrival—I think it was the second day after I arrived in Ottawa—was to write a letter to the military authorities asking them to grant me leave of absence, with the distinct understanding that I was to be struck off the pay-list. That letter is on record. So I was a colonel on leave for nearly a year. The military authorities, in the natural course of events, had to deal with my case to see whether they should continue me on leave or retire me; and for that purpose I was summoned by the military authorities to appear before a medical board. I did that, and when the medical board examined me they ascertained my disability, and according to law they had to report that disability to the pension board. The pension board could do nothing else than to deal with the case according to the pension list arranged by Parliament.

When the finding of that board was brought in, declaring that I had a 75 per cent disability, but adding a rider to the

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effect that some of my disability existed prior to the time I enlisted, I resented that and went to Colonel Belton, who was, I think, chief medical adviser of the pension board, and pointed out to him that the medical board had no authority or justification for making that statement, because I was in the pink of condition, had never been in better health in my life than I was when I undertook to raise my battalion, and continued in that state of health for over ten months after I had enlisted; that I had been in good health for 25 years previous to that, except for a time a few years earlier when, as honourable gentlemen who were then sitting in the other House may remember, I was threatened with appendicitis. At that time I went to Montreal and was examined by Dr. Lafleur, who knew all about my condition, and who is on record regarding my present condition. What I said to colonel Belton, and I desire to repeat it to this honourable House, was: "Colonel Belton, I have not come to you in my own interest; I do not give a fig for your pension; I have come to you, though, in the interest of 1,200 men whom I have taken overseas, and I want to know whether, when those men come back crippled, or wounded, or rheumatic from their heels to their head, or suffering from lung trouble or something else through exposure, you are going to say to them: 'Yes, you have a great disability; you have 75 per cent or 100 per cent disability; but you must have had some of that disability prior to the time of your enlistment with the 108th Battalion.'" I desire to say to this honourable House and to the country that if that is possible it will be a standing disgrace to Canada, because every one of my men—and it was the same with other battalions—were examined by my doctor when they joined the battalion before being passed into the service. When, about six weeks or two months after I started to recruit, it was assembled at Selkirk, the battalion was again boarded and any defects existing were discovered and dealt with. Then, when we arrived at Camp Hughes, my battalion was boarded by a board selected by General Hughes, who was the commander of the camp. The 108th Battalion was boarded four different times before it went overseas, and I think every other battalion at camp Hughes was treated in a similar manner. That being so, honourable gentlemen, I contend that this country is in honour bound to accept every one of those men as being fit, and must accept responsibility for any injuries these