

tions of that body. Consideration is at present being given to the final revision of the financial arrangements contemplated by the commission's report.

Mr. Speaker, I would draw the attention of the house to these words:

Those of the maritime provinces were investigated by the Royal Commission on Maritime Claims and have been in large part solved by the effect given to the recommendations of that body.

They have not been solved in large part. Some of the major recommendations of the Duncan report still remain to be implemented; I think perhaps the most important ones so far as Nova Scotia is concerned, those relating to coal and steel, have not been touched, notwithstanding the statements made by the Postmaster General (Mr. Veniot) and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston) over a year ago that these recommendations would be fully implemented, as well as the additional statement made by the Postmaster General over a year ago at a banquet tendered him in St. John, when he said that what the government had in mind for the steel industry in Nova Scotia, which would become effective in the course of a few weeks, would make every maritimer proud. We have been waiting since that time to know just exactly what remedies they had in mind, and to have them applied, but up to the present time they have not been announced. The latter part of the paragraph reads as follows:

Consideration is at present being given to the final revision of the financial arrangements contemplated by the commission's report.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the commissioner's report asked that immediate consideration be given; the Duncan commission stressed immediate consideration. The word "immediate" is stressed all through that report, which was presented to the government of Canada in the fall of 1926. In the session of 1927 it was taken up by parliament, and in his speech at that time the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), as you will well remember, said he hoped to implement in full, within a short space of time, all the recommendations contained in the Duncan report. That was over three years ago, and we in the maritime provinces are still waiting to have all the recommendations implemented. It is rather significant that about a couple of months ago I placed on the order paper a resolution asking for a readjustment of the financial arrangements as between the federal and provincial governments looking to special consideration and more generosity to the smaller provinces of this Dominion. I am glad to see that some

notice was taken of that resolution because in the speech from the throne it is stated that the government has decided to investigate the matters which the Duncan commission asked them to investigate over three years ago.

It is also to be noted with some degree of pleasure and gratification that the government intend to make careful inquiry into the workings and the administration of The Pensions Act. This act, as all hon. members no doubt realize—no doubt they have many of these cases coming to them as I have—is one of the greatest injustices from a statutory and humane point of view that we have in the Dominion of Canada. There is no question that many ex-service men in this Dominion are not being treated fairly or justly. I am not saying that the government has attempted to deal with them other than fairly and generously, but the nature of the statute as it exists, its application and the interpretations placed upon it by the Board of Pension Commissioners—who are probably fulfilling their duties—make it impossible to do justice to a certain class of ex-service men. Remedies have been suggested, some of a very far-reaching character, one of which rather appeals to me. It is that any ex-service man who served in any theatre of war and who has a disability but cannot by documentary or other evidence fasten that disability to his service during the war should be given the benefit of the doubt, since otherwise he is not able to secure a pension. The onus is on him of securing all sorts of evidence from medical men, from officers and men who served with him in the trenches, and from others who were in charge of hospitals. In a good many instances the ex-service man is obliged to secure all that evidence and have it placed before the pension board before he is entitled to a pension. That is placing a burden on ex-service men that in some cases it is almost impossible for them to discharge. As I said, the suggestion has been made that instead of the onus being on the ex-service man we should take the generous view that the disability of every ex-service man who served in some theatre of war should be considered *prima facie* attributable to his war service, and then it would be for the Board of Pension Commissioners to prove otherwise. In other words, make the proof come from the other side; make the Board of Pension Commissioners prove that his disability was not attributable to war service. I realize that this would open the door very wide, and perhaps permit of some abuses; it would be expensive, but it is the only way to solve the difficulty