

in pickle for a year or more he would have known that we have been increasing the rates steadily to correspond with the advance in the cost of living.

Mr. OLIVER: To correct the hon. member, I may say that part of what I read was from the Bulletin of September, 1916.

Mr. J. P. MOLLOY (Provencher): In rising to address the House, I want to assure the leader of the Government and every hon. member of this House that I am taking part in this discussion with no intention whatever of delaying the measure now before us. I am not here to oppose the Government because they think they are right, but I am here to oppose the Government and anybody else if I think that I am right, and if anything I may say in the few remarks I have to address to the House will help the Government to assist our soldiers, my time will be well spent. If we are to have compulsion in this country I take the ground that we are compelled to provide properly for the soldier wherever he may be.

The present Government is taking upon itself the most tremendous responsibility ever shouldered by any Administration of this Dominion. It is asking from Parliament permission to take the men of the country from their employment, their homes, and their families and to place them on the battle front. It is taking the responsibility of forcing men to make the greatest sacrifice men can make. From present indications the Government has no intention of attempting to equalize that sacrifice by forcing those who will not be affected, and whose wealth the men who go are protecting, to give of their means while other men give their lives. The question of the conscription of wealth, however, I do not intend to discuss here. But I say this, Mr. Speaker, and I say it with the greatest sincerity, that the Government which takes upon itself the tremendous responsibility of sending men to the front must see to it that the wives and children, and dependents of these men are left in such circumstances as not to add to the horrors of the trenches the anxiety which must come from the feeling that their dear ones are in want. That duty is plain, and cannot be evaded.

It is a notorious fact that separation allowances, and assigned pay, which at the beginning of this war may have been adequate to keep the dependents of soldiers from penury and want, are to-day abso-

[Sir Herbert Ames.]

lutely inadequate, and must be supplemented by certain forms of what I choose to call charity. The pay of the soldier, and the amount of money he is able to leave his dependents is the same as it was when the war broke out. The separation allowance is the same. But the cost of living has more than doubled, thanks to the exploitation and manipulation of the prices of the necessities of life, permitted, and condoned by the present Administration since the war commenced. The soldier's wife has watched her meagre pittance dwindling day by day as the cost of the necessities of life has soared. She has been compelled to ration herself and her family as her husband at the front is rationed, but on a far less generous scale. She is often compelled to move from the neighbourhood in which she has resided beside her more fortunate neighbours whose husbands or sons have not gone, and to take up her residence in more humble quarters. Materially and socially she suffers.

Under the Government's present system of financing the war, by borrowing and letting wealth go free, the soldier who goes to the front will find when he returns, if he does return, that to the sacrifices and hardships which he has endured in the trenches will be added the hardship and burden of paying by taxation the interest on the debt incurred by the war. He has had to fight; he will have to pay. Probably he will not grumble. But for the present at least it is incumbent upon this Government and this country to see to it that while he is away his dependents are looked after.

I wish to bring before the House one particular case. In the town in which I live a platoon was raised last year. Every man, woman and child, even the little boys at school and on the street assisted in recruiting the men required. I myself materially assisted, and when I ask a man to enlist, and he does so, I feel that I have assumed a responsibility. These men left on the 2nd day of last November, and a short time afterwards they were in the trenches. Among the great many men who went from the county of Provencher with that platoon was the only son of a man who is now between 70 and 80 years of age. The boy's mother died many years ago. The boy's poor old father is a confirmed cripple and has no means whatever. He was officially notified on the 31st of March that his son had been seriously wounded. What do you think, Sir, that poor old man has been living on since his boy went away? He has been living on the assigned pay of his boy