

of their case can be placed before authorities who have power to deal with it, it can fairly be said that no hardship remains. I am informed that when this question of the dollar for dollar bonus was considered at the recent Canadian Legion convention at Port Arthur, the consensus of opinion expressed was precisely on the lines of the legislation brought down. If my information is correct—and I think it is—the delegates did not ask that the dollar for dollar bonus be extended right across the board, to all who had been able to take advantage of it and to those who had not, but requested that an opportunity should be given to those who, because of crop failures or other circumstances, have been unable to take advantage of it.

Mr. NEILL: Did the legion definitely say that?

Mr. CRERAR: That is the information I have.

Mr. NEILL: The answer is, I am afraid, that the legion does not represent the settlers. The minister does not seem to be quite sure. I asked my soldier settlers if they would send a delegate to that convention of which he speaks in order that their views might be expressed there, and they said they could not afford to do so. Unfortunately the legion in what I would call its higher aspects has got more or less into the hands of a bureaucracy or aristocracy of colonels and generals, who can afford to attend these meetings. These people and influential legion branches in the cities have run the legion. Nowadays the voice of the poor man is not heard nearly to the extent that it used to be and that it should be. If the legion passed a resolution such as the minister stated, it is because they were not fully informed, and the reason they were not fully informed on the situation and the facts is that the poor man, the small man, the settler to whom a dollar looks so big, could not afford to send a delegate—they cannot afford to send a delegate to represent them at their provincial conventions—and only the leading lights and more or less the moneyed men or the men who have some government jobs or something of the kind can afford to go around the country to these conferences. I say that the settler was not adequately represented at that convention if they passed a resolution of that kind.

Mr. CRERAR: So far as that is concerned, General Ross, who was for several years head of the legion—president, I believe, was the title of his office—came from a rural district in Saskatchewan, from Yorkton, and he was wholly familiar with the conditions

obtaining among the settlers in the prairie provinces. I know further that during the course of his office he visited all parts of the country in connection with legion work. His successor, Colonel Foster, comes, I believe, from Vancouver.

Mr. BENNETT: Chief of police of Vancouver.

Mr. CRERAR: I discussed this proposal with Colonel Foster and he told me what the legion had discussed at their meeting at Fort William.

Mr. NEILL: That just bears out what I have been contending, that Colonel Foster and the legion do not represent the soldier settlers of British Columbia.

Mr. CRERAR: I am not going to pass judgment on that; but at any rate Colonel Foster is the man whom the delegates to the general meeting of the organization elected as president, and I assume he is the man they desired to have in that position. I know General Ross took a very active part in the work of the legion, and I have not the slightest doubt that Colonel Foster will do the same. Consequently I think this is reasonable legislation. If conditions change, it is always open to parliament to extend it or to enlarge the benefits. I was not in the house when the dollar for dollar bonus privilege was established, but as far as my knowledge goes that step was taken at that time because of the extraordinarily low prices to which all classes of agricultural produce had fallen in Canada. I have already given the committee the information that the price index for 1937 as compared with 1933 shows that the value of farm products has gone up from fifty per cent to, in some cases, well over one hundred per cent, in other words has doubled. On the whole I think the legislation is reasonable.

Mr. GREEN: One remark made by my good friend the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) I think was unfortunate. Perhaps he did not mean to go quite so far in his attack on the officers of the Canadian Legion. It would be too bad if the committee got the impression that the legion is made up of ex-officers or wealthy men, because such is not the case. I think the legion, as well as other soldier organizations across Canada, represents all ranks and all classes.

Mr. NEILL: I did not say "made up of," I said "managed by."

Mr. GREEN: Well, all these soldier organizations are doing the best they can for the returned soldiers of Canada, and as a