

solution before the House. I have always been of the opinion that the separation allowance has not been established on the basis of justice and equity. In the early days of the war we found that in Canada there enlisted a great many men who left large families behind them, and there also enlisted many men who left behind them no children at all. The result of the regulation in regard to separation allowance was that if a man went to the front and left behind him a wife with no children, that the wife received \$20 a month—the amount has since been increased to \$25—the same separation allowance as was received by the wife of a man who left behind him five or six children. I have known of cases where a man has left behind him nine or ten children, and where his wife has had to support that family on the same separation allowance as is given to a soldier's wife with no children at all. I trust before the close of this session of Parliament, some steps will be taken to readjust this matter; that we shall follow to a large extent the system in force in England, and that there will be a sufficient sum granted to the dependent wife and an additional allowance made for each child while the man is at the front. It is only reasonable to ask this of the House of Commons and of the country. It is only doing justice to those wives and children who have been left behind, because I cannot, by any process of reasoning, understand how a family of six can be supported on the same sum of money as a family of two, with only the wife at home.

The Minister of Militia and Defence raised some question in regard to the large amount of work involved if we undertook to adjust this fund so as to render assistance in cases where there was only partial disability. This does not necessarily involve any excess of work. The country in all these cases can afford to be generous, and when we find there is a family left behind and that there is perhaps an aged father, or an infirm brother, or an infirm sister, or an infirm child, the moment we find that physical disability, if it can be established to the satisfaction of the department that the man who enlisted, and through whom the support was claimed, had contributed an amount of at least \$20 or \$25 per month to the support of that family, then this country should give a corresponding amount to the support of the woman and children who are left at home. I trust that this matter will be taken up

[Mr. Tweedie.]

and thoroughly discussed, and that this House will see its way clear to readjust the system on which the separation allowance is paid so that there will be a scale graduating from the wife alone to the wife with five or six children.

Mr. BURNHAM: In deference to the request of the minister, I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn.

MONTREAL-GASPE STEAMER SERVICE.

Hon. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX moved:

For a copy of all letters, telegrams and other papers concerning the steamer service between Montréal, Quebec and the various harbours of Gaspé.

He said: I shall not delay the House at any length, but as this matter is of urgency I wish at once to direct the attention of my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and of my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to the serious situation which confronts the peninsula of Gaspé and the group of islands in the gulf of the St. Lawrence known as the Magdalen islands. The county of Gaspé is divided into two well-known parts—the mainland, on the Baie des Chaleurs, and the Magdalen islands, in the gulf of the St. Lawrence. Up till last fall the steamship service between the various harbours on the coast of Gaspé and the large centres of population such as Montreal and Quebec was performed by two steamers, the Lady of Gaspé and the Percesien. The Lady of Gaspé has been sold by her owners, at a very fair price I am told, and the Percesien, I am sorry to say, foundered in a storm not very long ago on her way to Liverpool. The large population along the coast of Gaspé, as well as the population of the Magdalen islands, depend for a livelihood chiefly on two industries, agriculture and fisheries. There are several harbours between Matane, which is the nearest railway centre, and Gaspé basin. The other section of the peninsula from Gaspé basin to Matapedia is connected with the Dominion by a railway system. I am speaking now chiefly of that section of the peninsula which is on the river St. Lawrence and also of the Magdalen islands. The people there have no communication except by steamer, and I am sorry to say that so far they have been unable to secure a steamer service for next summer. The disappearance of the steamer service between Quebec, Montreal, and the various harbours on the coast of Gaspé has created this situation; the fish, instead of being