

from the army without any provision being made for a pension. Such officers pretend that they are doing this to save the taxpayers' money.

Here is an actual case. A man was found unfit and the officer came to him and said: "Now sign your discharge application," and the soldier signed it. Then he lost all his rights to a pension. That is robbery. It is most unfair to the man, and while the officer says he is saving money to the country, actually he is depriving the man of the pension to which he is entitled. It is a grave injustice to the soldier, and it is precisely to protect themselves against this sort of thing that many soldiers who could easily obtain their discharge stay in the army because, if discharged, they could not get a pension. That is a fact which anybody who is in contact with the soldiers knows. It may be denied by the officials of the department. The minister may say that I am wrong, but I know that what I say is correct because I am in contact with the men themselves.

Let me recall the case of the soldier whose regimental number was changed from E554765 to E109063. He had just received the last rites of the church at the camp, and while he was at the last extremity some officer made him sign his resignation from the army, thus depriving his widowed mother of his pension. He died a few days afterwards. His mother was an old widow whom I knew well. I wrote to the minister and asked him to reconsider the case, and on my representations he ordered that the mother should receive a temporary pension of forty dollars a month. I give credit to the minister for that. I appealed to his good heart and he realized that it was a case of patent injustice. But I think the pension of forty dollars a month should be paid personally by the officer who went to that man when he was ill and made him sign his resignation from the army to deprive his mother of a pension.

The deputy minister of national defence forced a commanding officer in British Columbia to pay the fare of a soldier from British Columbia to Temiscouata county because the officer had not respected a ruling under the mobilization regulations. It was the right thing to do to punish the officer personally. In the meantime I give credit to the minister for the temporary redress he has granted in this case. But is it not shameful? This is one of the worst cases which has come to my notice. I do not know whether it makes any impression on the committee, but to me it is incredible that an officer should go to see a man who is so sick, and practically

holds his hand to make him sign his resignation from the army in order to deprive the mother of a pension. Let us speak of veterans' affairs. This is a case where an injustice was done, and it was corrected by the minister, but if I had not seen to it, the injustice would still persist.

The creation of a new department will be of no use to the veterans so long as the necessary reforms are not made in the medical corps of the army, so long as certain unscrupulous officers are in a position to make soldiers renounce their rights to their pensions by having them sign documents which deprive them of assistance. What I have said indicates the two main reforms which are needed to safeguard the rights of veterans.

In March last, Mr. Millard W. Rice, of Washington, director of national service of disabled American veterans, congratulated the *American* magazine for having published an article by the Minister of Pensions and National Health entitled, "Canada Looks After Her Heroes". But newspapers have published photographs of a veteran, Joseph-Moise Robillard, of Billing's Bridge, who walked the streets of Ottawa as a sandwichman with posters showing the way he was ill treated by the Department of Pensions and National Health when he returned from overseas.

There is also the case of veteran Peter A. Leclerc, who receives only \$18.75 a month.

Veteran No. 4040395 in the last war went to England and France and was wounded in his right foot. He had a tumour, his foot is in very bad shape, and he cannot walk. In December, 1918, he was treated at the Red Cross hospital, Saffron Walden, England, for fracture of the foot. The pension commission decided first that the wound was anterior to his enlistment, but on appeal, it was decided that the wound was due to service, and his disability was fixed at five per cent, which gave him \$3.75 a month for that invalidity. He tried twice to enlist in this war, but he was not accepted, he was found physically unfit, and was placed in category "C-1". Finally he obtained a temporary allowance of \$20 a month.

A parish priest of the diocese of Rimouski has quoted the case of one of his parishioners, No. 23203 of the last war. This veteran served in the army from 1914 to 1919 in Canada, in England, in France and in Belgium. The parish priest wrote me that this man, having been at the front during the whole of the last war, came back unfit, suffering from the effects of gas. He has a pension of \$7.50 and a veteran's allowance of \$40, or \$47.50 a month to provide for a family of twelve people.