

Supply—Veterans Affairs

freed from the obligation of speaking tonight at all. I have endeavoured several times previously to find an opportunity to present to the house and the country the things which I feel I ought to present but have been unable to do so. Before saying what I feel I ought to say, I should like to assure the Minister of Veterans Affairs that I have no ill will toward him. I have only sympathy for him in the responsibility which he has been called upon to assume, because I believe he has an exceedingly difficult road to travel.

I should like to recall to the house the fact that the other day I asked some questions about a veteran, Thomas Harvey. The reasons for my intense interest in that case were such that I think every member of the house would wish to know about them.

On June 14, 1948, I received a letter which I am going to read rapidly to save the time of the house, but it will appear on *Hansard*, so that members can read it. It is as follows:

Thomas Harvey
Ward A, Ste. Anne's Hospital,
Ste. Anne de Bellevue, P.Q.

There is no date on the letter, but the envelope is postmarked June 14, 1948. I have the envelope here, which can be seen. The letter reads:

Dear Mr. Blackmore:

Having read in the Montreal *Star*, June 9, of your speech on behalf of two Vancouver veterans, I would like to enlist your help in my case.

I am afraid to write to anyone in the government because I am afraid of being locked up in solitary confinement where I had been held incommunicado these last six weeks. I do not relish another term.

A criminal is at least given a chance to plead his case before a judge, but I was taken by force from St. Hyacinthe and locked up here at Ste. Anne's, for nothing.

I understand that this is supposed to be a free country. I don't think so. I don't like Ste. Anne's as I have always been abused here, and I want my release so as I can enter a hospital where I know I will be treated according to law. I am entitled to sign out of hospital but I am refused the privilege.

I am a prisoner here and not receiving treatment. I am refused the privilege of seeing my family. I cannot get a pass like other patients and I am taking a big chance writing this letter to you. If I am caught I will be taken to the cell again so I am appealing to you to stand by me and give me protection.

When I was taken by force from St. Hyacinthe I was not even given a chance to bring my belongings and I left a hundred dollar radio there. The patient I left it in charge of has sold it. Now I am told it is too bad but nothing can be done about it.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

Please get me out of this place. I am depending on you to get me released from here, as my health will never improve as long as I am unhappy, and held against my will.

Thanking you kindly, I remain

Yours truly,

Thomas Harvey.

P.S.—On receipt of this letter please send me a telegram collect, saying "Am investigating your case."

When I receive your telegram I will feel safe as they dare not abuse me knowing you are on the job, and I will be able to relax. Until I hear from you I will be in fear, so please do not fail me. I will pay the telegram.

T. Harvey, D-76502.

I wonder if there is an hon. member in this house who, upon receipt of a letter such as that, would not feel he had been called upon to assume a responsibility. I examined the letter with great care, as did also one or two of my friends, and as we could see no indication of insanity in the man I felt that the wise thing was to do what he had asked me to do. So I sent him this telegram the following day:

Ottawa, June 15, 1948

Mr. Thomas Harvey
Ward "A" Ste. Anne's Hospital
Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec

Am investigating your case.

J. H. Blackmore.

That is what the man had requested. The telegram had not reached him by the afternoon of the 15th. We received word from the Canadian National, by which we had sent the telegram, that it had not been delivered. This was the word which was given us:

C.N.R. (John Larouche speaking) phoned June 15 3:45 p.m. approx. that the telegram to Mr. Harvey was undelivered because Mr. H. has been discharged from the hospital. Last address was Ford Hotel, Montreal, enroute to Ottawa. 47 cents toll charges.

Taken by D.M.

I am putting in these little details to show hon. members how real this thing is and what a difficulty it puts me in. I did not know what to make of that situation, but we had the Canadian National Telegraphs look into the matter as far as they possibly could, and I received this word on the 16th:

Ryd re Thomas Harvey ward A Ste Anne Hospital was discharged June 14 as advised by information bureau. Names are Mr. Brule and Mrs. Taylor.

That puts me in a difficult position. I had never been in a situation of that sort, and I did not know just what to do.

Harvey came to my room on June 16. In accordance with the information that was given