

Harry Allen Read

19. What evidence can the government adduce to disprove the statements in this report?

It is reported that as late as April 15, 1951—almost seven years after his injury—although W/O Read had several weeks previously gone up to Shaughnessy hospital at Vancouver, seeking admission and treatment for his neck and back, he had been refused admittance by a certain doctor, although outpatient psychiatric treatment was available to him. If there is any truth in that report, then every member must realize that it is an absolutely astonishing situation. Here is a man afflicted with a physical injury who approaches a hospital, desiring to be admitted to treatment for that physical injury, and a psychiatrist has authority to refuse him admission to the hospital, but clears the way to give him psychiatric treatment, as an outpatient!

20. What evidence can the government adduce to disprove these statements?

It is reported to me that after many years of almost heartbreaking neglect W/O Read was finally, on May 17, 1951, admitted to Shaughnessy hospital for a spinal fusion operation, which the doctors decided to delay for some time to see if some physiotherapy might relieve the back pain.

Here is a man who has been abused for seven years and who has finally been admitted to a hospital for a spinal fusion which it would seem could have become necessary only through a serious physical injury to the spine, and which men all the way back through nearly seven years had refused to recognize, and stubbornly refused to conduct an examination of, which quite possibly would have disclosed the difficulty.

21. Does the government deny this report?

It is reported to me that, even at the late date of May 17, 1951, when W/O Read was finally admitted to Shaughnessy, he was classed as a 6A patient, thereby being denied allowances for his wife and children.

22. Does the government question the truthfulness of this report?

23. If not upon what grounds does the government attempt to justify this procedure?

It is reported to me that even as late as June 7, 1951, although W/O Read had by that time been transferred to the George Derby health and occupational centre, New Westminster, B.C., and was receiving something like fitting treatment, there had occurred no reclassification of this veteran patient to enable his wife and children to receive financial support.

24. Does the government deny all this?

[Mr. Blackmore.]

Once more, how does the government justify such delay in providing this tortured veteran with at least some small measure of peace of mind?

This is the first reference I have made in this house to H. A. Read. I may say that I have made attempts to obtain redress for this young man, but thus far those attempts have not been rewarded with adequate success.

I am bringing up this matter at the present time so as to give the Minister of Veterans Affairs time in which to probe into this serious case of Warrant Officer Read. I shall eagerly await his answers.

VETERANS AFFAIRS HOSPITAL AT SASKATOON
AIRPORT

Mr. R. R. Knight (Saskatoon): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the house a matter which may be said to have local application to my own part of the country, but none the less it is of interest to me. Some time ago I addressed a joint question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Lapointe) and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) concerning the proposed closing of the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital at the airport at Saskatoon, which is commonly known as No. 4. At that time the Minister of Veterans Affairs told me that the government was giving the matter further consideration and a firm decision would be announced in due course. It is because that decision has not been announced that I am tempted today to put upon the record some of the arguments why I think this particular hospital should not be moved to Regina or anywhere else.

Some time ago it was announced that the patients in this hospital would be transferred to Regina. A year or two ago—the former Minister of Veterans Affairs, who is in the house, will remember this—a similar move was under way, but owing to representations made at that time the hospital was continued at its present location. It was shown at that time that such a move would be injudicious and would create hardship for the friends and relatives of the men in that hospital. There are over a hundred of them and their homes are located in the districts served by Saskatoon. These men like to have their relatives able to see them with some facility and frequency.

The argument for closing this D.V.A. hospital at this particular time is that the buildings are needed for defence purposes. That is a good argument if it can be shown that the buildings are actually needed for that purpose. New buildings are being put up on the station. I have received notification