

Supply—Veterans Affairs

affirm in civil matters, and orally or in writing, and to produce such documents and things as the commissioners deem requisite to the full investigation of the matters into which they are appointed to examine.

5. The commissioners shall have the same power to enforce the attendance of witnesses and to compel them to give evidence as is vested in any court of record in civil cases.

All I am asking is that this House of Commons and the minister shall demand of the commission under consideration, the McCann commission, the performance they have a right to expect under the provisions I have just read. That is all. I suggest they have not begun to discharge their responsibilities under those provisions.

Then the next little bit of smoke screening that has been done has been to raise the crocodile tears about having the private records of the soldiers thrown open to public gaze so that everyone could read them, but that is not what I proposed. Oh, the hon. member need not try to laugh it off.

Mr. Lennard: I am not trying to laugh off the hon. member or anyone, but I know a rose when I see one.

Mr. Blackmore: The hon. member cannot know a rose unless he looks at it. Here is the sort of question to which the commission would have found the answer. These are questions that were asked by the member for Acadia, as found on page 5764 of *Hansard* for July 16, 1947:

Did Dr. William Baillie, departmental psychiatric consultant, who has never seen John Thom personally, submit as "evidence" to the Canadian pension commission his opinion based solely on a statement alleged by Dr. B. F. Keillor to have been made to him by John Thom?

Did John Thom submit evidence to the Canadian pension commission denying the statements attributed to him by Dr. B. F. Keillor and submitting documentary evidence in proof they should have been expunged from the records as falsities?

Did the Canadian pension commission accept Dr. William Baillie's opinion, based on Dr. B. F. Keillor's challenged statement, to outlaw John Thom's pension claim as a total war disability?

I do not think there is any member in this house who would hesitate to have the facts of his personal life, or that of his son, or his brother, or his grandson, or anyone else, revealed to the extent of answering questions like that. Those questions could have been answered sufficiently to justify or to condemn this action. Those are the questions this commission was supposed to answer, and I submit the greatest detail could have been given concerning the evidence bearing on all such questions as those. Those questions should have been investigated, evidence should have been adduced and included in the report.

Mr. Green: There are two questions I should like to place before the minister in

connection with this item. The first one is this. During the present session frequent requests have been made of the minister that a committee be set up to deal with veterans affairs. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we have been unsuccessful in those requests. I regret that there has been no such committee during this session. It is now too late for a special committee to function, but I should like to urge upon the minister that he have such a special committee set up during the 1951 session. In fact, I would prefer to have the rules amended to provide for a standing committee on veterans affairs. If the minister does not see fit to make a recommendation for a standing committee, he should at least have a special committee of the house set up to deal with these important questions. There are important problems coming up all the time, and sooner or later a committee of the house will have to be set up to deal with them. The longer the establishment of such a committee is delayed, the more difficult the problems become.

For example, there is the question which has come up within the last twenty-four hours concerning hospitalization. There are different views on that question which is worrying the veterans across the country. Much has been done in that respect, but there is dissatisfaction with regard to some of the provisions. This dissatisfaction could probably be ironed out if a committee were given an opportunity of considering the question. Another problem concerns the treatment meted out to the men of the merchant navy. As the minister knows, I have raised that matter on various occasions, and I do not intend to do so again today. The position of these men should be examined carefully by a committee of the veterans of this house.

There are other problems connected with the war veterans allowance and the pension act. For example there is the position of the children of those veterans who gave their lives for this country. Today those children are likely to be handicapped because their fathers were lost when serving Canada. I have always hoped that some arrangement could be made so that these young folks could start off in life on just the same basis as the children of those of us who were fortunate enough to come back from one or both of the great wars.

Those are just four of the problems which I believe could well be considered by a committee of the house. If the minister would intimate now that he intends to ask for the establishment of such a committee next year, the result would be that the Canadian Legion, the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans, the