

The CHAIRMAN: Surely there would be no objection, if the Committee pay the counsel. If we employ counsel on behalf of the Legion, they would not object to that.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, I wish to say with regard to the retaining of counsel, the Canadian Service Bureau does not represent all the returned men. Its membership is necessarily limited, and it would be impossible to enlist in its ranks every returned man. However, so far as the matter of pensions is concerned, the Canadian Legion represents every returned man whether organized or unorganized. The Canadian Service Bureau has always been available to applicants throughout the Dominion and, for that matter, from any part of the world. No change has ever been made in that respect and the question is never asked whether an applicant is or is not a member of the Legion. For that reason the Legion represents every returned man on the questions of pensions, soldiers' settlement and a dozen other matters which may effect the returned soldier. In Ottawa, we maintain that the Legion's Service Bureau is the proper channel through which all grievances of the returned man can be voiced. The unorganized man puts his claim before the Government and perhaps is turned down. He cannot judge what the difficulties are or what the remedies may be, but the Legion bureau is available and we are able to investigate his case and ascertain its weakness or otherwise.

Mr. ADSHEAD: Mr. Barrow, have you ever known of anybody, organized or unorganized, that have not come before you as an organization?

Mr. BARROW: I think some unorganized men may have problems which the Legion member does not have.

Mr. GERSHAW: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the unorganized soldier, he practically always applies to the Legion for advice and assistance regarding pension matters. I know a great many of these officers, many of whom are lawyers and have had a lot of experience with pensions and interpreting the Pension Act. I can hardly imagine how anyone could be more fitted to present their side of the case than those men, who for years have made a special study of this problem. In my opinion, these men with the assistance of Colonel Biggar ought to be able to present the case in concrete form.

Mr. MACLAREN: Colonel Biggar is employed by the Elections Committee simply as electoral officer. It seems to me if this Committee can arrive at a conclusion as to what it desires in the way of amendments to the Pension Act, that the putting of those amendments in the shape of legislation can be done by an officer of the department. The departments of the government are bristling with legal advisers; you have them for the House of Commons drafting and putting into shape all legislation submitted to them. There are many officers specially paid to draft legislation on all matters for the House of Commons.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: We have available paid representatives who can be used by this Committee or any other committee.

The CHAIRMAN: We should have one man retained who will be at our disposal for the special purpose of drafting this legislation. I attempted to do this myself last year but I must confess my effort was not very satisfactory.

Mr. MCPHERSON: Could we make use of the departmental advisers without authority?

The CHAIRMAN: We did, and we did not have any authority.

Mr. MCPHERSON: I think the criticism of the returned men on certain points has not been covered by legislation, and my own idea would be to give every possible advantage to them in order that they may have their case satisfactorily prepared. I feel the returned men should have the privilege of naming their own counsel so that they will feel satisfied.