

Mr. CALDER: I understand one of the reasons why the committee thought it desirable to put in this provision was on account of the disparity between the pensions that we pay to widowed mothers and the pensions which are paid in the United States and Great Britain.

Mr. McKENZIE: Do we pay more?

Mr. CALDER: We pay considerably more.

Mr. McKENZIE: Well, that is an advertisement for us.

Mr. CALDER: The result is that if we widen the breach, so to speak, between our pensions and the pensions paid by these countries we are making very considerable difficulty for them. That is particularly so in Great Britain because I understand that our pension scale for this class of persons is very much higher than it is there, and I think the committee has in mind the object of trying to avoid comparisons of that nature. I am told that there are about 4,000 widowed mothers altogether living either in the United States or Great Britain; I would think that the larger number, over 3,000, live in the latter country. I merely mention this because I understand it was one of the main reasons why the committee acted as it did.

Mr. McKENZIE: I do not want to have a widowed mother restricted to living in this country, and to have her gloomily looking out of the window over the sea, and anxious to go back to the Old Land and live and die with her relatives there. At present she cannot go there because there is a restriction on her pension; if she goes she loses the money. That woman has had enough troubles in the death of her son, and other difficulties, without adding to her suffering. When you adopt such a restriction as this and say that she cannot go and spend the balance of her days wherever she pleases I think it is a pretty small affair. I think such a woman ought to be at perfect liberty to go where she likes and enjoy her pension.

Mr. McMASTER: Does she lose her pension in that case? Well, what really serious ground is there for such conduct on the part of the Government? Surely the minister is not serious when he tells us that such a course is to be followed after we have, in our wisdom, decided that the widowed mother should receive a certain pension, for the sake of saving the feelings of other nations whose financial obligations

or whose sentiments are not such as ours are, and who have not granted such a good pension to these widowed mothers; I cannot imagine that that is a serious argument. We have made up our minds that a widowed mother should receive a certain pension by reason of the loss of her son. Let us take this case, because I am sure it is one that will occur very often: A mother has come over to this country with, say, a couple of boys with whom she was residing before the war. One of these boys went to the front and was killed. She has married daughters in Scotland with whom she wants to go back to live. Is it seriously told me that because of the transference of her domicile from Canada to Scotland that this woman's pension is to be cut down, if there is a striking difference between what the Canadian Government pays to this unfortunate woman and what the British Government is able to pay to her unfortunate sister? That woman is receiving her compensation for tearing up the roots of her life in the Old Land and coming out to a country where economic conditions are better, and where the people are, or think they are, able to afford larger pensions. I cannot conceive the argument to be a serious one. I trust I would be the last man in this House to urge greater expenditure, but I cannot think that the difference involved would amount to anything serious and I do not like the principle of this thing.

Mr. NESBITT: A great many of the widows who were in the Old Country did not come out, as my hon. friend says, to this country and then go back to the Old Land. A great many of the sons of such people had come to this country and had assigned pay to their mothers in the Old Country. That was the case with respect to a great many of these widows over there. The main reason for not giving the same amount is that living in England and Scotland is so much cheaper than it is in Canada. The pension paid to widowed mothers is therefore equalized by this clause as nearly as it can be equalized. It is all right to talk about being generous but I think we have been very generous in the matters of pensions in this country from first to last, and we are very generous as far as the recommendations of the committee are concerned. This question was argued at great length before the committee and the decision was almost unanimous that the recommendation should take its present form.