

4. (a) The position of widowed mothers in relation to pension has received the attention of every previous committee and has, as well, been discussed by the House during this and former sessions. The widow of a soldier receives her pension as of right, wholly without reference to her financial position. A widowed mother, on the contrary, has heretofore by our Pension Law been called upon to prove as a condition precedent to award of pension, substantial dependency—either actual or prospective—upon her deceased soldier son.

(b) It is suggested that this distinct variation in treatment arises from that provision of the law which binds every husband to support his wife, while save in the Province of Quebec, no such legal obligation towards a mother is laid upon her son. Even in that Province your Committee is advised a mother must be in need, or in the words of the Pension Act must be in a "dependent condition" before she can substantiate her claim for support.

(c) Parliament has during the past two years ameliorated the position of widowed mothers by providing that no reduction be made in the pension of a widowed mother because of her personal earnings or because she has the advantages of free lodgings, by reason of the ownership of her home or otherwise, nor if she be resident in Canada because she is in receipt of income from outside sources of not more than \$20.00 a month. In so far as that income exceeds the sum of \$20.00 a month the pension is reduced. A reduction is at present also made on account of actual contributions made by other members of the family and not less than \$10.00 a month is deducted on account of each unmarried son residing with her whom the Pension Commissioners consider should be able to contribute to her support.

(d) To the above extent it will be noted there has been a departure from the original and perhaps unreasonable rule, that even the smallest income or emolument accruing to a widowed mother must be deducted from her pension. What is now urged is that a widowed mother shall be paid a pension as of right, without reference to her dependence upon her son or to her own financial resources; or to put it in another way, that widowed mothers shall be placed upon the same basis as widows.

(e) Your committee has given this subject very earnest consideration. To abolish the existing restrictions and award pension as of right to every mother of a deceased soldier, as and when she becomes a widow, would add many millions to the pension bill. It would moreover result in the anomaly that mothers with ample income would receive an added supply from the country's treasury, while she who is less fortunate in worldly wealth, although her sacrifice was as great, would have nothing save her pension upon which to live. That a similar anomaly exists in the case of widows does not justify the proposal and your committee therefore is unable to recommend same.

I doubt if I need delay the House to enlarge on what I have just read. If we are prepared to admit that the pension awarded to the widowed mother is sufficient to maintain her in decent comfort, there can be little ground for changing the present regulations. If that pension be not sufficient, then we should increase not only it, but the pension awarded to widows, because

[Mr. Cronyn.]

it must not be forgotten that both these classes of pensioners receive the same amount. I am prepared to agree there are the strongest sentimental considerations for treating widowed mothers with the greatest generosity, but do not let us forget that to pension a widowed mother who has financial resources of her own, would in reality be class legislation of an unfair kind, even though it may be justified under a well-known Biblical quotation.

The remaining suggestions and recommendations with regard to pensions are passed over without comment; they are set out somewhat fully in the report and upon perusal will readily be understood.

Re-establishment.—We now come to the third subject submitted to the committee, which is comprised under the general term of "Re-establishment." When we recall the list of activities mentioned earlier in my remarks under the charge of the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment, we can understand that re-establishment covers a wide field, and we must add to these the large undertaking of the Soldiers' Settlement Board and a variety of more or less disconnected suggestions which came before the committee, shortly set forth in the last page of the report. The chief task of the committee on this branch of its inquiry was a consideration of the problem of unemployment as it directly affects the ex-service man, together with those other aspects of the same problem in its bearing on the disabled; the after-care of the tuberculous, and what are known as "Problem and Handicap Cases." Hon. members may question the association of care of the tuberculous with unemployment, but there has emerged from the close study given to this grave disease a definite body of opinion that the State, for its own well-being, should provide, not only the suffering soldier, but as well the stricken civilian, some form of sheltered employment which at one and the same time will aid in his recovery, guard against infection, utilize what modicum of effort the patient can expend and thus render the whole body of unfortunates happier and more contented.

Let us return for a moment to the returned man fit for work, who is unable to obtain it. We have declined—and, in my opinion, for fundamentally sound reasons—to grant further general cash bonuses or gratuities. I cannot add anything of value to what has time and again been repeated in the House on this point. We have also failed to discover any practical