

Hon. Mr. LYNCH-STAUNTON: Have we not paid out at the end of 25 years \$325,000,000?

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: You pay \$100,000 the first year; \$200,000 the second year—that is \$300,000; we pay out \$300,000 the third year—that is \$600,000. You pay \$100,000 each year and add \$100,000 each year. I have not made the computation. I have accepted these figures, and I think the Board of Pension Commissioners is prepared to stand by them.

I have discussed the justice of the case. The cost is before us. It is represented to me, first, that an injustice was done in cutting these people off, and that there are in Canada to-day a number of wives and children and not a few dependent parents who are urgently in need of this assistance by reason of the loss of the breadwinner of the family. Having regard to the cost of the present Pension List, which stands at \$31,000,000, I would say this with respect to this clause. If we were to strike out all the other provisions of this Bill that involve cost or were to strike out this clause, personally I would prefer this clause. It would increase your Pension bill \$100,000 the first year, as I have described, and so on. It increases the Pension bill no more than \$2,500,000 in any one year, and that is in the 25th year.

The question is whether we, in addition to all the other charges we have to meet, can afford to add to our present Pension bill a sum of money which in the first year amounts to \$550,000, which at no time throughout the whole period amounts in any one year—and that only in the last year—to more than \$2,500,000. As I say, this clause is the meat of this Bill. If we are to increase the Pension list anywhere, I submit here is the place to do it.

I have given the matter thought and consideration, and I have undertaken to differ from my colleagues on the Committee, and, with respect to this clause, I will support the Bill.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD: Mr. Chairman, as a member of the overseas forces, I am very much interested in the explanation of the honourable gentleman from Edmonton (Hon. Mr. Griesbach) of the various clauses of this Bill. It must be apparent to members of this House that those who had the opportunity of serving on this particular Committee were in a much better position to familiarize themselves with the terms of it and what was proposed than those who were not acting on the Committee and who had to wait for the information contained in the Report.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH.

I do not propose to enter into any discussion in detail as to the information which has been advanced by the honourable gentleman from Edmonton. I could not throw any more light on the subject than he has done. But, having received the information which he has given us, I must say that he has created an impression upon my mind to the extent at least of encouraging me to support the Bill as it was introduced into this House.

I not only commanded a unit overseas, but I enlisted thousands of men in Western Canada and encouraged them to join the overseas forces. In doing so I had to give certain assurances to them and their families before they entered the service. I told them, as almost everyone did who recruited men for overseas, that in cases of emergency their families and dependents would be properly protected and cared for. I did not tell them, and I would have been ashamed to tell them that, if it so happened that they met with an accident while on leave or when they happened to be disengaged from military service, their dependents at home would not receive the protection of the people of Canada. I assured them, as I have no doubt other men recruiting overseas forces did, that they would be amply protected if they gave their services for war purposes.

When they went overseas the people at home broke into song, and said they would keep the home fires burning; but they did not say they would only keep them burning while the men were actively engaged in the front line trenches, and that they would entirely neglect a man who might be injured in a football game while in reserve, and physically incapacitated. The contract, as stated by the honourable gentleman from Edmonton (Hon. Mr. Griesbach) between the people of Canada on the one part and the men who served overseas on the other, was that the State should own the services of the men who enlisted from the time they enlisted until they were discharged. That was the contract, whether stated or implied; and that is the contract which the people of this country are morally bound to maintain in any legislation that may be brought before this House.

The best evidence that that was the contract is the fact that it was embodied in the law; and I must confess that I am not very proud of the action taken—although I must have been a party to it, for I was a member of the Chamber at the time—when this Parliament reneged from the contract and passed the legislation of 1920, possibly because they felt it was costing too much money. But,