

Mr. POWER: And fuel?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Fuel is always given.

Mr. POWER: Is not one of the causes of complaint that all the municipalities make arrangements for the medical care of ordinary civilians who are on relief but that the same arrangements are not made for the families of pensioners on relief? Is not that one of the causes of complaint?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Undoubtedly there have been representations made.

Mr. POWER: And what is the reply of the department to that complaint?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: The reply has always been that in no case has the dominion accepted responsibility for medical care for anyone who was not a pensioner. In the arrangements made by the Department of Labour with the various provinces medical care has never been recognized as a dominion responsibility, and so far as the families of the pensioners are concerned it has been felt that they have not lost the right to be considered eligible for receiving medical care from the municipalities in which they reside.

Mr. POWER: The same argument applies to clothing, I have no doubt?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Yes, but we have given clothing.

Mr. POWER: You have given clothing, but as a matter of compassion rather than as a matter of right.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: That is right.

Mr. POWER: The complaint is this. Ex-soldiers are constantly writing in—I get many letters from them—to the effect that they are discriminated against, and it would appear from what the minister says that there is some foundation in fact for these complaints, though I am not blaming the department for that. But the fact would appear to be that in a great many municipalities, in almost all the municipalities, some degree of medical care is given unemployed persons on relief and their families, and to some extent also they receive a clothing allowance or clothing, whereas the families of returned soldiers do not receive this medical care nor do they receive clothing from anybody. The municipalities take this ground: You are an ex-soldier and consequently a responsibility of the federal government; therefore we will not have anything to do with you. If you want anything, go to the federal government, to the Department of Pensions and National Health, and they will

look after you. That appears to be the great difficulty; it is the great cause of complaint. I am not suggesting that there is any negligence on the part of the government or of the department, but the facts are there. Throughout the country returned soldiers are complaining very bitterly that they are being discriminated against. Whether the department should contribute clothing and medical attention to the families of returned soldiers on relief is a matter of policy regarding which it is not for me to make suggestions; but I think that after four years of this kind of thing with these complaints being made the department should at least have come to some conclusion as to what the future policy will be. I think the minister ought to give an explanation.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: There have been complaints from some municipalities but really, considered as a whole, from very few, because in the vast majority of instances the municipalities have realized their responsibility for medical care. With the exception of a few municipalities, though a good deal has been said about the question, the situation has not become an acute one.

Mr. POWER: The moment a man is known to be a returned soldier you will find in most municipalities that he is told to go to the federal government. Hon. members generally, I believe, have had the same experience. We have all had letters from returned soldiers all over Canada complaining that the municipality absolutely washes its hands of them if they are in the category of a pensioner, high or low, or of one who is entitled to relief. In some instances they go a step further. If a man is a returned soldier, even if he is not entitled to relief from the department, a great many municipalities say, "Go to the returned soldiers' organization or to the department." Unfortunately, or fortunately, perhaps, some returned soldiers' organizations have in the past had certain sums of money which they could dispose of to look after their own people. The army and navy veterans in Quebec expended large amounts derived, as we are told, from the illegal and immoral practice of running lotteries, but those amounts were expended to very good purpose in looking after the returned soldiers and their dependents not only in Quebec but throughout the country. But as a result of the activities of the soldiers themselves and of the department, a great many municipalities would not look after the soldiers any longer, whether they were entitled to relief under the