

Q. I will go back to the case I mentioned.—A. Let me think. He would be entitled, in my opinion, if you leave the qualifying clause in “who has seen service in a theatre of actual war.”

Q. That is an alternative, General McDonald. The first clause is, “when a member of the forces who has seen service during the great war.” Then I quoted a case to you a moment ago.—A. Mr. Macdonald, you have brought up a case about which I do not think you should ask me to give a snap decision. It raises a point that is very interesting and very important, and I should like to discuss it with my colleagues as to just how that would bear upon it. I think your point is certainly going to cause some deep thinking, and I certainly would not be prepared to say “no” at the moment.

MR. MACDONALD (*Brantford*): It seems to me, according to that Act, that it is a mere technicality or a mere chance that the widow is unfortunate enough not to receive a pension, because the sergeant was killed on Sunday night. He was sick for several weeks as the result of his injuries and then died. If he had been disabled for several months—

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE: What was the cause of death—pneumonia?

MR. MACDONALD (*Brantford*): It was a motor accident which was found to be purely accidental. I should point out to the minister that this man was not home running around and having a good time. He had finished his leave, to all intents and purposes, and was on his way back to camp and was just half an hour from camp when the accident occurred. As I said a moment ago, he was in the hospital suffering from his injuries for several weeks. He might have suffered for several months, and if he had suffered for several months, I presume the Department of National Defence would have discharged him and turned him over to the Department of Pensions and National Health. He was a veteran of the last war. He had, according to the wording of this section, seen service in the great war. If he had been fortunate enough to have been discharged and turned over to the Department of Pensions and National Health, his widow doubtless would have received a pension under the terms of this section.

The WITNESS: I am inclined to agree with you.

MR. MACDONALD (*Brantford*): What I am saying is that I trust this Act will be interpreted widely enough to give the widow a pension even if through some delay her husband had not been turned over to the Department of Pensions and National Health.

The WITNESS: This committee will have the opportunity to make it so.

MR. MACDONALD (*Brantford*): I am sure the pension board will consider it very carefully.

MR. CLEAVER: I should like to associate myself with the views as expressed first by Mr. Macdonald of Brantford and then by Mr. Turgeon.

I really think that Mr. Turgeon's general approach to the problem is the one by which we should approach it; that is, to put it on a general basis.

The man who enlists for service overseas ceases to be a free-will agent. He is then under the control and direction of the army. Try to put yourselves in the position of the widow of this sergeant from Brantford. She would quite naturally say to herself: My husband did his bit in the last war and he enlisted for overseas service in this war. He would not have been in that motor accident if it had not been that he enlisted for overseas service in this war. I think we would be on quite safe ground if in considering these pension matters we were to keep in mind at all times the thoughts of the dependents who are left. I cannot give expression as forcibly as I should like to do concerning my very strong conviction that the widow of that sergeant in Brantford is undoubtedly entitled to pension. If the present Act is not wide enough to include a case of that kind, we should amend the Act to include it.

[Brigadier-General H. F. McDonald.]