

Canada Evidence Act

years after liberation he developed tuberculosis or some other ailment of which there was no record. Because the man happened to have an old bronchial scar which showed up in his discharge records, it was said that the scar had been incurred prior to service. Every kind of excuse was given to refuse a legitimate claim to benefits while the man was undergoing treatment to cure tuberculosis. There were other ailments, such as stomach illnesses. I know of several men who are suffering from arthritis and nerves. There were also cases of alcoholism. Unfortunately, I know of several chaps in the same camp as I was who have undergone serious bouts of nervous depression. For some of them it has been too much, and they have done away with themselves.

If I had continued as minister, it would have been my aim to bring all of those men in and have them examined long before now. Such an examination would give us the records of what privation and malnutrition will do. I also suggest to the members of this house that in the long run it would save us some money because some of these men are going to develop serious illnesses which may be attributable to pensionable disabilities. Their lives will be shortened. We may be faced with heavy expense in treating a disease or some disability that is pensionable, and there may be a great argument about it. They become very hard cases. We should catch these conditions early and deal with them. Not only are we salvaging a veteran and adding some years to his life, but we will be learning more about the effects of the type of life veterans had to endure for some period of time. As I said, there are not that many men. Among the Dieppe prisoners, there were over 2,000. A number of them, like myself, have been through the hands of the Pension Commission for one reason or another. Some of them are now dead. On the army side there are not that many who have not been checked out. I would say today that the men we are really looking for are chaps from the air force because over the period from September 1939 to May 1945 many of the prisoners of war were airmen who had been shot down. The certainly outnumber the army prisoners of war.

I do not say that a prisoner of war has a greater claim to consideration from the point of view of sentiment or of the duty that he performed. He was a serviceman like many others, but he did not have to go through battle, as many did. So far as I was concerned, I was in one battle and that was it.

• (6:00 p.m.)

I do not say my treatment was worse than that of many other servicemen. We did tend to lose an awful lot of weight, and I did not weigh nearly as much when I was captured as I do now. But all my friends in my old regiment say the same thing, there is something in each case which goes back to those days when we were incarcerated in cold buildings during the winter and given poor food to eat. Then, there were the mental pressures, and so on. So, I make a plea to the government to take up this question. There are not many men involved, relatively, and I do not believe the expense would be great. It would take some time to organize, but I think something should be done. I will put the question—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business having expired I do now leave the chair to resume the same at 8.00 p.m.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

• (8:00 p.m.)

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**CANADA EVIDENCE ACT****AMENDMENTS RESPECTING ADMISSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE**

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen (for the Minister of Justice) for the third reading of Bill S-3, to amend the Canada Evidence Act.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a few remarks to make prior to consideration of the actual contents of Bill S-3. The first matter I want to raise may result from inadvertence, and I want to give the government house leader every break that is possible. Both of us are members of the committee on procedure and realize that the purpose of the change in the rules governing the legislative process was to shift the emphasis in the debate to the report stage and the third reading. Over the dinner hour, I searched diligently but could find no record of the transcript of our discussions in the