

APPENDIX No. 4

The CHAIRMAN: We have copies of the comparative statement showing the rates of pensions payable in Canada, New Zealand, France, Italy, etc.

Mr. NESBITT: I move that these documents be placed on record. Seconded by Mr. Brien.

Motion agreed to.

EVIDENCE.

Colonel JOHN THOMPSON: Called, sworn, and examined:

Mr. NESBITT: I would suggest that Colonel Thompson make his statement as to the general working out of the Pension Act so far and then we can ask him questions.

WITNESS: In what respect.

Mr. NESBITT: In all respects—where there is trouble and where there is not trouble.

Mr. COOPER: We have a report from the Board of Pension Commissioners. Will Col. Thompson deal with it and elaborate on it.

The CHAIRMAN: That report deals more specifically with the Pension Act and proposed amendments thereto. It would naturally come up for consideration later on when we have the evidence before us, to see how these amendments are applicable to the Act. If the witness can start in on any line which will interest the Committee on the working of the Pension Board particularly the present position of it, we will make a start.

WITNESS: Most of the sections that we suggest amendments to, refer to definitions of various parts of the statute, and we have recommended one or two changes where we have thought it was rather working a hardship on the individuals concerned. With one or two exceptions if these amendments go through there is absolutely no increase of liability on the part of the country to any very serious extent; on the other hand it will do justice to the individual who, we understand, now needs it. Apart from that none of the recommendations affect the liability of the country, one way or the other. Most of the amendments are to sections that require explanation, but if there are any points upon which the Committee wish information or figures I have a memorandum here.

By the Chairman:

Q. For the present we do not wish to take up all your recommendations; we want to get the details in our mind. For instance, you can give the Committee some idea about the progress that has been made in the growth of the payment of pensions; you have those figures before you; can you carry it down to date?—A. That is the yearly liability.

Q. The yearly liability to the country?—A. Yes. For the year ending the 31st March, 1917, the expenditure was \$1,791,566.10; that has increased in 1918, to the same month, to \$7,402,253.53, and to the same month in 1919 it had increased up to \$16,589,021.29, and to March 1920 it had increased up to \$23,824,215.85.

By Mr. Nesbitt:

Q. That is the total for the year?—A. The total for the year.

By Mr. Arthurs:

Q. Is not that very much under the estimate that was made?—A. Up to the end of 1918 we estimated something like under \$30,000,000.

Q. Then your actual disbursements have been that much lower than your estimate?—A. Yes, I never estimated over \$30,000,000, which covers administration expenses.