

*Veterans' Benefits*

was a great deal of in-fighting in terms of which side or which way one would go in the Spanish war. He was wounded and he came back to England. I think his description of England would fit very well the description of Canada by someone who came back from Spain at that time. I will read it because I think it is a good description of the contrast between what Orwell found in England in 1939 when he returned and what he knew was on the horizon. He wrote:

Down here it was still the England I had known in my childhood: the railway-cuttings smothered in wild flowers, the deep meadows where the great shining horses browse and meditate, the slow-moving streams bordered by willows, the green bosoms of the elms, the larkspurs in the cottage gardens; and then the huge peaceful wilderness of outer London, the barges on the miry river, the familiar streets, the posters telling of cricket matches and Royal weddings, the men in bowler hats, the pigeons in Trafalgar Square, the red buses, the blue policemen—all sleeping the deep, deep sleep of England, from which I sometimes fear that we shall never wake till we are jerked out of it by the roar of bombs.

Those words were written before the outbreak of the Second World War. They were written by someone who, having fought in the war in Spain, having seen the awfulness of the political conflict there, recognized that there was a deep complacency within his own country and his own society, a complacency in people who could not come to grips with the fact that a war was going to be fought between those people who believed in democratic institutions and those people who believed in exactly the contrary.

Canadians, perhaps, slept an even deeper sleep than those in Europe who were much closer to the conflict. Canadians who went overseas, who fought in Spain and returned to say "appeasement will not work, this is a force that has to be fought, a force that has to be fought with guns because it cannot simply be fought with words", those who lost their lives—and there were hundreds of them—and those who were wounded—and there were hundreds of them—came back to Canada as official outlaws, but as unofficial heroes to many, many people.

● (1720)

Many of them went on to fight in the Second World War. Many of them were unable to fight any longer because of the seriousness of their illnesses, but all of them have one thing in common, and that is that none of them, by virtue of the fact that they fought in the Spanish Civil War in the battles of Jarama, Brunete, Quinto, Belchite, Fuentes de Ebro, Teruel, The Retreats and The Ebro, will be as well known as those Canadians who "officially" died. But dare one say that their fighting for democracy in Spain was just as important, just as worthy now, finally, of our official recognition as the fighting of those Canadians who sacrificed so much for us in the First World War, in the Second World War and in Korea, and, indeed, who continue to risk their lives in the keeping of peace throughout the world?

**Mr. John Campbell (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has made a very eloquent speech and, I must say, for a very worth-while cause. I welcome this opportunity to speak on the motion proposed by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr.

Rae). He asked that the government consider the advisability of providing veterans benefits to Canadian members of the Loyalist Republican Forces who fought in Spain between 1936 and 1939. The wording of the motion demonstrates the hon. member's understanding that there are factors to be taken into consideration and that the government must weigh carefully these factors when contemplating the validity of what is proposed.

The government has given this question every consideration, as have previous administrations.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Well, do something about it.

**Mr. Campbell:** Before his untimely death, the late Hon. Dan MacDonald gave very serious consideration to this cause, as did the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) in the previous administration, and as has the present acting minister, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne). These three ministers have all been asked to consider this matter.

I am certain that they all gave it serious, thoughtful consideration, and yet none of them felt they could recommend that the members of the Mackenzie-Papineau brigade become entitled to the benefits available to Canadian veterans under the veterans charter.

One can certainly congratulate those men who went to Spain and waged war on the fascists. One can applaud their bravery in the face of a better manned and better equipped enemy. As soldiers they were superb, and Canadians in general regard the performance of the Mackenzie-Papineau brigade as heroic. Certainly the Spanish people appreciate the participation of the international brigade. The new administration in that country has, I believe publicly thanked all persons who joined the international brigade. However, the indisputable fact is that they were "soldiers of conscience", freelancers against fascism, and by all logic this House cannot say that they should be treated in the same manner as men and women who fought in the uniform of Canada or, in some cases, fought for countries allied with us in war.

Let us just consider the mandate of the Department of Veterans Affairs. First, it has an obligation to commemorate the memory of those who died in the service of Canada. That is why every April Canadians gather on Vimy Ridge to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the carnage of the First World War.

On November 11 of each year Canadians stop to remember their fallen countrymen. DVA has programs in place and is developing others to ensure that Canada does not forget the sacrifices made during the conflicts in which we participated. Veterans' associations like the Royal Canadian Legion and members of the National Council of Veterans' Associations are active in supporting the cause of veterans and active in commemorating the sacrifices made by veterans.

Just over a week ago the acting Minister of Veterans Affairs led a pilgrimage to the Far East to commemorate the memory