

cause they want to be in uniform, but because they must remain in uniform until their pensions are adjusted. They have all the rights of citizenship; they should not be debarred from attending any meeting, and it is in very poor taste for any hon. member to say in this House, as the hon. member has stated, that it would not be safe for those men to go into public meetings. It would not be safe for whom? For the soldier or for the anti-conscriptionists in the hon. gentleman's county?

Mr. VERVILLE: I said that it would not be safe for either side.

Mr. ARTHURS: The hon. gentleman thinks it is right that he or any other gentleman may, in the province from which he comes, address public meetings that, to say the least of it, are not very loyal, but he denies the right of soldiers to attend those meetings or any others. That is absolutely unfair. Those men should have the right—

Mr. MEDERIC MARTIN: Just a few words about those meetings we had in Montreal.

Mr. ARTHURS: Is the hon. gentleman going to make a speech? I thought he was going to ask a question.

Mr. MEDERIC MARTIN: I do not want to make a speech, but I want to correct my hon. friend.

Mr. ARTHURS: The hon. gentleman (Mr. Verville) said that those soldiers misbehaved themselves at Sydney. I presume the meeting on the occasion to which he referred was one to be addressed by a friend of his, Mr. J. C. Watters, I do not think the people of Canada have anything against the soldiers for having broken up that meeting, if they did so.

Mr. GAUVREAU: It was a labour association. A labour man is sometimes as good as a soldier in this country.

Mr. ARTHURS: The soldier is as good as the labouring man. The soldier is a man who has proved his worth so far as this country is concerned. If a man goes to the front, is wounded and comes back and, whether he likes it or not, has to remain in uniform, he is surely entitled to every privilege that any labouring or other man in Canada may have. Those soldiers should have the absolute right not only to attend public meetings in uniform but to join any political clubs, whether Conservative or

[Mr. Arthurs.]

Reform. They should have the absolute right to attend those meetings in uniform for the simple reason that they are not permitted to attend them in any other costume. Any man who knows the circumstances knows perfectly well that those men may be retained, and that, for many months after they return to Canada, they have to appear before board after board. During all that period, in order to draw their pay, in order to live, they must abide by the military regulations, which state that they must be in uniform. Does any man in this House think it fair that those men should be deprived of the ordinary rights of citizenship, whether at election time or at any other time, simply because they are forced into that position and have to appear in uniform if they appear at all? There is not a gentleman within the sound of my voice who does not believe with me that those men have the same rights as anybody else. I am not asking that they receive greater rights than the labouring men, or Mr. J. C. Watters, or any other man.

Mr. VERVILLE: The hon. member does not seem to understand me correctly.

Mr. ARTHURS: I cannot understand any hon. member making an argument of that kind.

Mr. VERVILLE: Those men should have their rights or they should not have them. I stated frankly that I did not mind whether a soldier attended a meeting in uniform or not, and if my hon. friend did not understand me, it is not my fault. I have as much respect for a soldier as my hon. friend has. My hon. friend would not say that they have a right to go into any meeting and break it up. Although they have the right as free citizens to attend meetings the same as any one else, whether they are in uniform or not, they have not the right to break up a meeting. I asked the minister what the Government were going to do about the matter. When I am addressing a meeting, I do not mind seeing any number of soldiers. They have a right to attend meetings, but they have no right to use their positions as soldiers to break them up. From now on there will be more soldiers in this country than ever before, and those men will surely have a right to hear whatever is said at any place, but if they are going to utilize their position in uniform as soldiers to break up a meeting of a body of men, that is wrong for the soldier, wrong for the country and wrong for the citizen. When I bring this matter