

*Supply—Pensions—Relief*

Mr. SUTHERLAND: I know that not long ago a relief officer was in Woodstock and the people who thought they were entitled to relief got in touch with him and made their arrangements. I have no doubt the same applies to St. Marys and Stratford.

Mr. SANDERSON: Can a returned man who receives a voucher go to any store he chooses? Are they honoured in all stores?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: No, but the man may select his own store.

Mr. SANDERSON: As a matter of information, and without any desire to criticize, may I ask by what means those requests are placed before the minister or his department? If he decides relief should be granted, what happens? Do the requests come from the individuals who are interceding on behalf of the returned man?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: They may come in one of several ways. A man may communicate directly with London. He may communicate with my hon. friend, and we would get in touch with London. Then, the head of the legion might write.

Mr. SANDERSON: There must be some overlapping if those who are entitled to relief are to get it. Undoubtedly there are many persons who do not know about the relief. As the minister has said, they might come to me, as a member of this house, or they might go to the mayor of the town, or to the legion; but apparently there is no plan under which urgent cases may be dealt with without going through a procedure which would use up a considerable amount of time. I am not suggesting the department should advertise that it is giving relief, but is there no policy under which a returned man may know that there is an unemployment relief fund and that he may obtain relief without delay or red tape?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: I do not think there would be anyone who would not know he was entitled to relief. They are pensioners receiving their cheques each month, and they may write to the district administrator and receive immediate attention. In all cases our officers are instructed to act with the greatest possible dispatch.

Mr. SANDERSON: I suppose the representative in London, for instance, has several men working under him?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Yes.

Mr. SANDERSON: Do the officials acquaint themselves with the case of every individual who applies?

[Mr. Sanderson.]

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Oh yes. They check up on the statements and as to the need, whether they are working and so on.

Mr. SANDERSON: Do they travel around or do they do it by communicating with someone in the town from which the claim comes?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: In both ways. They would probably get in touch with the man personally, and they might follow that up by letter. They do keep in very close touch.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I should like to emphasize again a point that has been raised by a number of hon. members, and that is in respect of the medical attention necessary for the families of pensioners who are on relief. The minister knows that in practically every municipality where a system of civic relief is being carried on, accompanying the relief is a modicum at least of medical attention supplied to the families on relief which they are unable to pay for themselves. I have no such cases in my territory because it is a rural territory, but I have had the matter brought to my attention rather forcibly by citizens of Calgary and Edmonton who have sent to me a number of requests individually and from organizations and have cited cases in both these cities. In both Calgary and Edmonton not only is nursing and medical attention given to the families of those on municipal relief, but in many cases where the condition of a member of a family requires it special allowances are made for special diets and so forth in the case of certain illnesses and weaknesses. None of that, however, as I understand it, is provided for the families of pensioners who are receiving this form of relief. It has been suggested, of course, that the municipalities, being relieved of any other burdens with respect to the families of pensioners, should be glad to look after their nursing and medical attention, and possibly they should, but the fact remains they do not. They assume no responsibility whatever in respect either of the pensioner or of any member of his family. Although the intention of the act and the policy of the department is to bring these small pensioners up to a parity so far as relief is concerned with the civilians on relief in that particular municipality, the fact remains that the returned men are not on a parity because it is a certain drain on their resources to provide the medical attention that their families require. I am not certain as to the extent to which the act would make it possible, although I am reasonably familiar with the act, of course, having been working in that connection for a great many years. I