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THE DUTY OF A WAR PENSION

By JOHN L. TODD

(Lately a Member of the Board of Pension Commissioners for Canada)

A war pension is money owed by us all to a SAILOR, SOLDIER or his DEPENDENTS because of his DISABLEMENT or DEATH. The object of the pension is to ensure for the pensioner and his DEPENDENTS MAINTENANCE which he is unable to provide.

In the year following the Civil War there were 126,722 pensioners of the United States. They were paid annually fifteen and a half million dollars. Forty-four years later, the pensioners had increased to 946,914 persons. They received yearly pensions amounting to nearly one hundred and sixty-two million dollars. That, briefly, states the "pension scandal" of the United States. Though grave abuses exist, the scandal is not so great as the figures seem to indicate. The first law under which pensions were paid had many shortcomings, and failed to give due relief to those who suffered in the war of secession. More comprehensive measures were necessary and inevitable. Some of the measures adopted are sound; others, made possible by the improper use of political power, are ill-founded. Resentment at the injustice of the earlier pension laws did much to facilitate the introduction of abuses.

One result of the World War has been to give many men, who formerly felt nothing of it, a feeling of personal responsibility towards their community. The universal desire to compensate fairly those who suffered by their war service is a part of that feeling. When compensation is thought of, pension naturally suggests itself. But there has been much discussion, during the past generation, of pension scandals. For that reason, there is usually associated with our desire to compensate by fair pensions those disabled in the Great War, a feeling that war pensions are inevitably subject to abuse