

PENSIONS

WIDOWS OF SOLDIERS WHO HAD DRAWN LESS
THAN FIFTY PER CENT PENSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. R. MacNICOL (Davenport): May I ask the Minister of Pensions and National Health a question along the lines I have asked before? I have had quite a number of letters during the last few days from non-pensioned widows' associations across Canada asking me to inquire—that is, if the minister is able to take the house into his confidence at this time—whether it is the intention to bring down legislation at this session, should such legislation be necessary, in order to make it possible to grant pensions to the widows of soldiers who in their lifetime drew less than fifty per cent pension.

Hon. IAN A. MACKENZIE (Minister of Pensions and National Health): During the last session I made a definite announcement on this subject. The hon. member for Davenport is aware that the parliamentary committee on pensions recommended at the last session that the government give consideration to the question which he now mentions. The government considered it very carefully and came to the decision that no legislation would be introduced during the remaining part of last session or during this session to deal with the subject. I have also expressed my own opinion, namely, that the objects aimed at by this organization are more related to a national system of social security than they are to any statutes within my jurisdiction for administration.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The answer is no.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

ADDRESS IN REPLY, MOVED BY MR. ALPHONSE
FOURNIER AND SECONDED BY MR. W. R.
MACDONALD (BRANTFORD CITY)

The house proceeded to the consideration of the speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor General at the opening of the session.

Mr. ALPHONSE FOURNIER (Hull)
(Translation) moved:

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General of Canada:

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Earl of Athlone, Knight of Our Most Noble Order of the Garter, a member of Our Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Grand Master of Our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor General and Commander in Chief of Our Dominion of Canada.

May it Please Your Excellency:

We, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the House of Commons of Canada, in parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both houses of parliament.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in rising to present this motion, I wish to convey to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) on behalf of the people of the county of Hull the gratitude they feel towards him for the honour done to their representative. This honour is all the greater for having been unexpected. I welcome it, because the people of Hull are very sensitive to this mark of esteem on the part of the head of the government.

I wish all the hon. members of this house were as well acquainted as I am with the people of my constituency. All of them, whether workers in the city or tillers of the soil, are excellent Canadians and good Christians. The vast majority of them are of French descent, but nowhere else is there to be found more harmony, more collaboration, more cooperation between the two races. The present conflict has imbued them with a single will, a single spirit, a single aim—to make all the sacrifices necessary to bring about the defeat of the enemies of liberty. I am proud of them and I want to be worthy of their confidence.

On Wednesday last the leaders of the political parties and a number of hon. members paid tribute to the late Right Hon. Ernest Lapointe. I wish to add my tribute to theirs. Scarcely two months ago there died a great Canadian, one of the most illustrious sons of his race. The news of his grave illness greatly affected us and it is with deep sorrow that we learned of his death. One of the best known figures of this parliament is no longer in his place. Our country has lost a devoted and faithful servant. His dying in harness was but the crowning of his career, the completion of his life. For nearly thirty-eight years he gave the best of himself to his country and his people.

Difficulties, contests or illness did not prevent him from doing his duty to the end. What the Canadian nation owes to him cannot, at this time, be appreciated at its true value. History will rank him in his rightful place, alongside, and on an equal footing with, the greatest men of our country. But even to-day, his opponents as well as his friends recognize him as an outstanding statesman. His qualities, his talent, and his work have been eulogized by voices more authoritative than mine, but I wish to join them in saying to Madame Lapointe, to my friend Hugues and to Madame Ouimet how deep is my sorrow