

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

THE CANADIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

3416 McTavish Street

MONTREAL, July 6, 1943.

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MY DEAR BILLY,—We are very much concerned with the condition of the War Veterans Allowance cases. Recently we have had a number of these to deal with and the situation is appalling to say the least.

The Government gives a War Veteran's Allowance case, single man, \$20.00 a month, plus \$5 cost of living bonus but does not allow him to earn more than \$5 making a total of \$30 a month. The result of this is that these men are living in doss houses and the cases that we have are mostly living in a privately run doss house with 40 men in a room where they pay \$3 a week and the conditions are most unsanitary. It is a disgrace that veterans who served in the last war should have to submit to such conditions.

To just give you one instance, there is a man living there who had very good service and was suffering from shock brought on from malnutrition but by careful treatment in our Clinic and supplying him with the necessary vitamins the doctor was able to bring him to a condition where he could earn a living. The man got a job at \$20 a month but when he filled out the card which had to be taken to the Department the employer was informed that the man could not earn more than \$5 a month. The man started to work for \$5 and naturally the employer benefitted to the extent of \$15 a month which, of course, is ridiculous. The man, however, could not subsist on the \$30 due to the fact that while he was working he needed heavier meals and as he could not come to our Convalescent Home for meals he had to get them in a restaurant. The result was that he had to give up his job.

Our contention is that the Government should treat a War Veterans Allowance case the same as they do a pension and let the man earn all he can. None of them would ever earn very much and the man would be of some use to the country.

I discussed this whole question with Mr. Walter Woods, the Associate Deputy Minister of the Department of Pensions and National Health on June 16 and he stated that the Department was entirely in favour of this arrangement but the Finance Minister would not agree to this as it would upset the Old Age Pension Rates.

I would draw to your attention the statement made by the Minister of Pensions in Toronto where he states that—"The men of the present war are to receive a post-discharge of \$44.20 a month, while engaged in vocational training". How can they justify the distinction between that rate for the men of the present war and the rate of \$30 allowed for men of the last war?

I am attaching herewith copy of a report from Dr. Grant who conducts our Clinic at 902 Inspector Street.