

APPENDIX No. 4

the soldier, and I do not think that there is any provision whatever made for any special pension or additional pension being granted to the widow, or any other relative of the deceased in consequence of his having gained the Victoria Cross.

"If you desire to bring this matter forward, you had better forward the case officially, and I would like you to add a copy of this reply so that the Militia Department may be in possession of the facts when you represent the case."

By the Chairman:

Q. Did Sergeant-Major Hall obtain the Victoria Cross in this war?—A. Yes, sir, and he was killed. Many people in Winnipeg think, as his mother is in poor circumstances, that she should receive some recognition.

Q. Doesn't she receive a pension?—A. That I cannot say. Perhaps she does.

Q. Is she a widow?—A. Yes.

Q. Then she would be entitled to something?—A. This was the letter referred to (reads):—

"When we remember the glorious achievements of this Winnipeg boy (whose gallantry has not apparently been fully realized by the citizens of Winnipeg) it behooves us to leave no stone unturned to see that Mrs. Hall is granted the privileges that go with the coveted decoration without undue delay."

Q. There are no privileges in this country going with the Victoria Cross? That simply raises the question of whether a man gaining the Victoria Cross, the D. S. O. or the D. C. M. is entitled to extra recognition.—A. Another question to which I desire to call attention is that of the Employers' Liability Act.

By Mr. Nickle:

Q. Before you leave pensions, what is your idea in relation to commutation of pensions?—A. That this Pensions Committee should take power to arrange for it.

By the Chairman:

Q. You think power should be given to the Pension Board to commute in special cases?—A. I had that as a point to be taken up a little later on. I shall be very pleased to give the Committee, if desired, some information regarding the working of that matter in England. I say that some years ago, my father, who has taken a large interest in returned soldiers for many years, got the British Government to reduce, or rather abolish, the age limit at which a man might commute his pension. Previously the age had been 50 years. Now, there is no age limit. Owing to this, a very considerable number of ex-British soldiers have been enabled to settle in this country and in Australia. Some of these have gone back to take part in the present war. I should be very glad if, at some future time, you would like to have information upon this question, to supply it.

By the Chairman:

Q. Was it not the practice to send a Government commissioner to Canada in connection with commutations?—A. No, that is another matter and had to do with the payment of Imperial pensions in Canada. I am referring to a lump sum given to a man in certain circumstances. He might wish to buy a business or emigrate. I have the figures at which these pensions can be commuted.

By Mr. Nickle:

Q. They are based on the expectancy of life?—A. Yes. Some of the English insurance companies offered to do this: they would give a man a lump sum for his pension, but would restore that pension at the age of 65. If he died before reaching the age of 65, they gave his estate a hundred pounds, or something like that. The whole thing can easily be worked, and I would very much like this Committee to recommend that power be given to commute pensions in certain cases.