

I wish specially to appeal to the Minister of Militia and Defence. I do not intend to be critical as to the administration of the separation allowances, but I wish to get from my hon. friend some explanation which might serve not only in this but in similar cases. My object in bringing this matter before the House is because I believe the case has been exhausted through correspondence between the hard-headed Scotch Presbyterian lawyer who acted for this unfortunate woman and the various departments of the Government. It is at the request of Mr. Henry Tucker, K.C., of Montreal, a lawyer of very high standing at the Bar, that I bring this matter up. The name of the soldier whose wife, according to Mr. Tucker, has not been fairly treated by the Patriotic Fund is Wineas Zwingle. He joined, in the early stage of the war, the 150th Battalion, and he is on the firing line at the present time. He left behind him a wife and four children, but previous to leaving, according to my information, he made provision for his wife and family: the assigned pay \$20, next, the separation allowance, \$20, and \$24 per month was allotted by the Patriotic Fund, making a total payment of \$64 per month for the wife and four little children. This soldier also left his wife in possession of a small candy store in Montreal. During the month of February, 1917 the assigned pay of Zwingle and the separation allowance were sent, I do not know under what regulation, to the Patriotic Fund by the Department of Militia. The Minister of Militia stated a moment ago, that both the department and the Patriotic Fund were working in close co-operation. From March 1 to the middle of August, 1917, Mrs. Zwingle received \$242.75, but from the latter month until December 8, 1917, she did not receive a red cent. Remember that this woman is absolutely penniless, with the exception of the candy store, and has dependent upon her four children, the eldest of whom is only 12 years old. In October, 1917, Mrs. Zwingle saw her lawyer, Mr. Tucker, K.C., and at that time, as alleged by Mr. Tucker, she was positively starving. He inquired from the Patriotic Fund, first why they cut the allowance from \$24 to \$10 per month, and second why the assigned pay and the separation allowance had been handed over to that organization for administration. The answer Mr. Tucker received from the Patriotic Fund, and I am simply quoting from the voluminous dossier which has been handed to me by that gentleman—was to the following effect: "This woman is

keeping what is known in common parlance as a 'blind pig' and you had better see Recorder Semple of Montreal." Mr. Tucker, who is a very warm-hearted Scotchman, saw the woman was starving and freezing—and it is not necessary to remind any hon. gentleman of the severity of the weather during the winter which has just closed—and he went to interview Recorder Semple whose statements were most favourable to Mrs. Zwingle. The recorder said he had received the complaint referred to about Mrs. Zwingle, but had investigated it and found it to be baseless. Later on, acting on the advice of her lawyer and at the suggestion of the Patriotic Fund, Mrs. Zwingle sold her candy store for a certain sum. Remember, Mr. Speaker, I am not passing judgment on the Patriotic Fund organization. I am myself one of the incorporators of the fund, and one of its members, and I do not wish to pass judgment upon those who compose the organization. I know what devotion is being displayed, and what excellent work is being performed by the members of the Patriotic Fund all over the country; but sometimes, owing to misinformation or otherwise, persecution may result which is absolutely unwarranted. In November, 1917, according to Mr. Tucker, the Department of Militia and Defence having been stirred up by the many letters written by him, sent Mrs. Zwingle a blank declaration had to fill in and swear to, which declaration had to be countersigned by some officer of the Patriotic Fund. The declaration was for the purpose of determining how Mrs. Zwingle received her separation allowance and assigned pay. For one reason or another the Patriotic Fund—and I repeat that I am not criticising the organization because I am not personally aware of these facts, I am merely repeating what I was told by a very reliable counsel—refused, or rather, one of its officers refused, to countersign the blank declaration, and hence Mrs. Zwingle was once more deprived of both her separation allowance and assigned pay. In November, 1917, Mr. Tucker again complained to the department and obtained an order that the checks be paid direct to Mrs. Zwingle, but in the meantime she had been absolutely starving and freezing. On the 12th December, 1917, relief came in the form of cheques for two months from the department at Ottawa. On the 24th December, 1917, there was made against this unfortunate woman, who was evidently born under an evil star, another very serious charge, which I need not repeat, but which, according to the documents I have before me, is absolutely