

before a magistrate as being insane, and the decision was that her condition had resulted from lack of nutrition. The case was a very deplorable one and attracted a good deal of attention. I am afraid there are other cases, because this committee has been appointed, and this is a part of its report.

Sir EDWARD KEMP: That is in regard to pensions?

Mr. OLIVER: In regard to the condition of those dependents who would be entitled to pensions. May I take the liberty of reading the part that is material?

Sir EDWARD KEMP: Certainly. I have nothing, however, to do with pensions. That matter comes under the direction of the Minister of Finance. The Pension Board is under the Finance Department; but if my hon. friend desires to place anything upon Hansard, I will direct the attention of the Minister of Finance to it.

Mr. OLIVER: As this matter relates very intimately to the question of soldiers, I am sure the minister will take a sympathetic interest.

Sir EDWARD KEMP: Certainly.

Mr. OLIVER: The report says in part:

Firstly. I will deal with dependents who have been left with property on which there are unpaid balances or mortgages or other encumbrances. In every instance of cases of this class the correspondence shows quite clearly that the pensions being received are entirely inadequate to enable these people so situated to live, and to take care of the payments that are now and will in due course become due. It would appear, therefore, that we would be failing in our duty to those who have so nobly laid down their lives in the great cause for which our Empire is at war, if we, as a people, did not do all that was in our power to evolve some plan whereby these people could at least be protected against the very probable contingency of losing entirely what equity they possess in these several properties. I would suggest, therefore, that representations in regard to these cases be compiled and forwarded to the Government at Ottawa, together with a recommendation for their attention and assistance in financing, on the easiest terms possible, these people, until such time as they may be able to find an opportunity to dispose of the same in such manner as they will be able to obtain at least the amount of the equity that they possess therein.

Secondly. There are the cases of those who have no property interests, but who are dependent entirely for their subsistence on the moneys received as pensions from the Government. It is gleaned from the correspondence received that some are at present quite content with the present conditions. In the majority of cases, however, it is stated most emphatically that the amount of pension does not permit of the ordinary necessities of life

[Mr. Oliver.]

even in the summer time, when, by reason of climatic conditions, less nourishment will suffice, produce is at its cheapest, and there is no need of warm clothing, light or fuel; but all express grave fears as to how they will be able to subsist when winter is here and there is fuel and other necessary comforts to be provided. In one or two instances, I find there are people who come under this class, but who are receiving some assistance, such as, for instance, being allowed to board with friends, and are, therefore, for the time being, comfortably cared for, but in no case of this kind is there assurance that assistance of this nature is likely to continue for any definite period.

In dealing with these cases under review it is evident that the health also has a great deal to do with the manner in which one can exist on the moneys so allowed. Then, again, you must consider the different temperaments of the people, as, while one may be content and happy with one standard of living, the same standard would not—by reason of health or otherwise—suffice for another, nor do I consider it right and proper that any widow or dependent who has made the greatest sacrifice that any human being can make in giving up their loved ones, should be asked to live in a lesser state of bodily and mental comfort than they were, at the time their loved ones enlisted, able to enjoy.

This is, I believe, a matter of sufficient importance to warrant a full, complete and immediate investigation on the part of our Government, and I would suggest, therefore, that you forward to Ottawa your request to that effect.

Thirdly. We were asked to consider the need of some provision being made for the children of soldiers who have by the loss of their father and mother become orphans, and in which case the allowance made by the Government is totally inadequate to clothe, feed, house and educate and in other ways care for them until they are fitted to take their place in the world as wage earners.

There are a few (I understand about 50) at present in this city and district, who come under this classification, and it would only be reasonable to assume that this number would in the near future be very materially increased.

These children should not become the objects of charity, but rather do I consider the Government should make some provision for them, either by paying to people in private homes and willing to undertake the work of rearing these children a sufficient remuneration for this duty—the children to be at all times under Government supervision—or to establish boarding-schools for this purpose.

Fourthly. Cases have been brought to our attention where Canadians have for some reason or other enlisted in the Imperial army, while their dependents have been for some time prior to the war and are still residents of this country. The pensions received from the Imperial Government represent a mere pittance as compared to the cost of living in this country. It would, therefore, appear only right and proper that our Government should make some provision for such cases as these, and any other special case that might from time to time arise.

That is the report made to the Committee of citizens by the gentleman whom they