

that the doctor himself went on the stand and said he was approaching the problem from the point of view of constructive treatment, and I have not yet discovered that it has taken fully into consideration the consequences of that change of diagnosis when that opinion is passed on to the pension commission.

It may be said to the credit of the chairman of the pension commission that he has carried on attempting to administer justice in the majority of these cases with very little change of policy; nevertheless the situation of many of these men at the present time is precarious. I am well aware that the chief neuropsychiatrist is an official of the treatment branch and that the pension commission is under no obligation to accept his opinion; nevertheless when a man of his professional status does place on file a finding or diagnosis as I have described, and uses the term "of constitutional origin," that must of necessity influence the opinion of the medical men on the pension commission. It is held as being synonymous with the term "congenital defect". That interpretation of this section, in the light of the medical evidence and medical opinion expressed, is as I say depriving several thousand ex-service men of the protection originally intended under the section which I have quoted. I hope the minister will take the earliest opportunity to open this subject up by way of amendment to the act and make very clear that pre-enlistment conditions of this nature are not considered in regard to pensions in connection with those who served in a theatre of actual war.

Mr. QUELCH: I understood the minister to say a little while ago that he would like to give the committee a decision on the question of widows' pensions.

Mr. POWER: No, I did not. I am giving an opinion.

Mr. QUELCH: Well, would it not be possible to place that opinion before this committee at this session?

Mr. POWER: I hardly think so.

Mr. LENNARD: Would it be possible for further negotiation to take place between the governments regarding the problems of ex-service imperials at present in Canada?

Mr. POWER: I have no objection to taking part in any negotiations. I would not mind a trip to Europe if the government is willing to send me to negotiate, but I do not know what I could say to them more than I have already said.

Mr. GREEN: Will the minister explain the decrease in this vote this year?

Mr. POWER: Based on the figures covering the operations of the Canadian pension commission over a period of nine months, I anticipate that the total amounts paid out in respect of European war pensions which, for the fiscal year 1936-37 amounted to \$41,424,432.74, will, during the current fiscal year, show a reduction in the vicinity of \$600,000. In that year \$40,330,000 comprised the regular monthly payments made to pensioners. This amount will show during the current year a net decrease of about \$130,000.

There are many factors and activities which produce variations both up and down in these amounts, but by far the major influences leading to decreases are the deaths of pensioners and the discontinuation of additional allowances to children on their reaching the age limit for pension—sixteen in the case of boys and seventeen in the case of girls. On the other hand, the amounts are increased by new awards of pension; by the extension of additional allowances to children beyond the age limit, who are continuing at school and whose parents are in necessitous circumstances, and by the increase in the rate of pension to existing pensioners whose disabilities are causing them greater handicap as the years go by. Other factors of a minor nature enter into the financial picture, but are not of any considerable moment in the aggregate.

Deaths of pensioners are providing a reduction of approximately \$750,000, and the discontinuance of children's allowances, less the amount allowed for extension beyond the age limit, will account for about \$480,000. These are the major factors on the decrease side.

On the other hand, new awards of pension, both to ex-soldiers themselves, who receive entitlement, and to widows and dependents of those who die, will amount to about \$535,000, and the increased pension due to higher percentages being paid will add another \$540,000. Other major factors which will have the effect of reducing the amount are the sums involved in what are described as first payments and retroactive payments. These are non-recurring payments which cover back periods for which pensioners are entitled to payments under the provisions of the act. In 1936-37 these payments accounted for \$938,000. Largely due to the limitations on such payments provided for in the amending legislation of the session of 1936, during the present year these sums will show a very considerable reduction, and will not amount to more than \$450,000, making a reduction under these items alone of nearly half a million dollars.