

6-7 GEORGE V, A. 1916

Mrs. Hodge is only a few years younger. The old people are in destitute circumstances, Mr. Hodge not having worked for over twenty years, and their two sons as noted above were their mainstay.

"I wish, under the circumstances, you would use your influence with the Officer of Pay and Pensions to see if an exception cannot be made in this case and a pension granted to these old people who have given their only two sons to the country.

"As you will observe, in view of the age of Mr. and Mrs. Hodge, the pension will not continue very many years.

"I inclose certificate as to this old couple's circumstances, signed by Dr. Campbell of this city."

I referred that matter to Colonel Dunbar, and he very kindly took it into his consideration, and replied that if definite information could be forwarded, certified information, as to the circumstances of these old people, arrangements might be made to grant them a pension. But that, sir, is not a right; it is a favour; and I maintain that in a case of this nature the parents of such men should be entitled to a pension without having to make an appeal *ad misericordiam* for it.

By the Chairman:

Q. If they are in easy circumstances, I do not think they should receive a pension?
—A. In that case, no, certainly not.

By Mr. Macdonald:

Q. It should be granted only in cases of dependence.—A. Yes, but a widowed mother, if a dependent, would have got it, but because her husband is 78 years of age and alive, according to our Act they are not entitled to a pension.

By the Chairman:

Q. There will be many cases where claims will be made for pensions for parties who should not get pensions, and I think we ought carefully to consider cases of that nature. If the father is alive and unable to work there is no reason why a pension should not be given if the son has been killed.—A. There is no reason.

The CHAIRMAN: Already, there have been attempts to set up claims that are not justifiable. You have to guard the country against that sort of thing, or you will run away with millions of dollars unnecessarily.

Mr. MACDONALD: That is one side. There is the case of the woman who has lost an only boy.

Mr. NICKLE: You will have to define "dependents" very carefully.

Mr. MACDONALD: May I ask what the term "beneficiary pensioners" refers to?

Colonel BELTON: There is no doubt, in the case just mentioned, these people will get a pension, and the Act plainly provides for it, the present Pay and Allowance Regulations allow for that.

The CHAIRMAN: Please proceed, Mr. Scammell.

The WITNESS: Another case, which is somewhat analogous to this is the following: I have a letter from Winnipeg regarding the mother of the late Sergeant-Major Hall, V.C., and I referred the matter to Colonel Ward who was here yesterday, and he wrote me the following letter:—

"With reference to the attached correspondence regarding special pension for Mrs. Hall, mother of the late Sergeant-Major Hall, V.C., no provision has been made for this at present by the Dominion Government. I might point out that in the British service a special pension of £10 a year is granted to every soldier who receives a Victoria Cross from the date of act of bravery by which the decoration has been gained, and there is also special provision in the event of an annuitant being unable to earn his livelihood, that this amount may be increased. But as far as I know, this special pension ceases with the death of

[Mr. Scammell.]