

# SOMEBODY PROFITS BY PAY BOOK DETENTION?

**This is Allegation Before  
Parliamentary Committee  
on Returned Soldiers, and  
Sir Herbert Ames Pro-  
mises to Press Matter to  
End—Half a Dozen Land  
Schemes for Western Pro-  
vinces—Report Expected  
April 28**

Possibly the last of the public meetings of the Parliamentary Committee on Returned Soldiers was held yesterday in Toronto. The members returned to Ottawa by the late train and though a few meetings are expected to be held for the consideration of details, it was understood that evidence was closed with the mass which the committee has available. The report will be presented to Parliament, so far as can be foreseen, about April 28.

### Was Western Day.

Yesterday was a Western day. Witnesses from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia put forward points of view differing noticeably from the main complaints in the East. Inadequacy of pension to meet the Western scale of living was one; duplication of returned soldiers' committees was another; and the ultra-democratic desire to put almost all pensions on an equal scale was a third. One aired more fully than all others, the underlying suspicion in soldiers' minds, that someone profited by the believed differences in their paychecks and what they anticipated. The retention of the paybooks chiefly in Quebec and in Canadian camps in England seemed to be the ground the men most disliked, though a British Columbia witness definitely corrected the prevalent notion so far as his own pay was concerned. It had been given down to the last cent, even to the exchange rates.

### Col. Marlow's Evidence.

At the morning session a letter was read from Col. Marlow in protest against the elimination of his evidence.

"What portion is to be eliminated?" asked Mr. Pardee.

"The portion I read," replied the Chairman, referring to the statements of Mr. Bennett when he asked Col. Marlow if he had endeavored to secure Col. Thompson's position, and witness had replied that: "I am an officer and a gentleman, and I did not come here to be insulted."

It was decided to leave out evidence in the morning report, as well as Col. Marlow's protest of the afternoon.

John McRae explained the nature of the help given soldiers and dependents by the Returned Soldiers' Association of Winnipeg; 475 out of 1,000 had been aided, while assistance to wives and other dependents is not repaid.

When exploitation of returned men was alleged, Mr. R. B. Bennett asked:

"Is there any doubt that the men themselves believe they are being exploited?"

"If they do, their assumption is incorrect," was the response.

"Just what do you mean by exploitation?" queried Mr. Pardee.

"I mean putting them under obligation to a society that it may have a hold on them and use them for its own ends, political and otherwise," replied Mr. Bennett.

### "No Pussy-footing."

Sir Herbert Ames and Mr. Pardee protested. The latter accused Mr. Bennett of directing questions at the witness with ulterior motives. The Director of National Service replied that he was there to ask certain questions and he proposed to do it. If he couldn't be was quite willing to withdraw from the committee. He was only asking a cold-blooded question. This "pussy-footing" was not his idea of running a Commission.

Mr. G. Harmon Jones, of the Soldiers' Aid Commission, Regina, sketched a plan for the settlement of the returned soldier on the land as follows: (1) Rural settlement farms

of 160 acres each; (2) community-centre farms of 30 acres; (3) small truck farms with so much land allotted to each returned soldier. The second type of farm would be of an educational nature. The men would be undergoing training. Lecturers would be sent out from the universities to give instruction.

### Notes Some Improvements.

At the afternoon session evidence was given by three Alberta men, Sergt.-Major Guilfoyle, Pte. C. Wells and Pte. Harold Hodgson, of the European War Veterans' Association, Calgary. It was stated that in Calgary soldiers were desirous of taking up small plots of land for vegetables, etc. Sergt.-Major Guilfoyle remarked that the Pension Staff before January last "was either inadequate or incompetent," but since its improvement and the centralizing of the pensions' office 90 per cent. of the complaints had stopped. A separate asylum for insane soldiers also was suggested, so that a man would not have to mix with criminal lunatics or alien born enemies. It would be self-supporting, as the men's pensions would be diverted. An orphanage for soldiers' children where the guardianship was not satisfactory, and that artificial limbs be made in the west were other suggestions. There was at Calgary an artificial limb factory, so that the waste of time and trouble in going to Toronto would be avoided. About twelve men were employed in that at Calgary.

Hon. Chas. Murphy—More than they have here?

### Inadequate Pensions.

A Government tailoring factory for uniform making was another suggestion. These Western witnesses also complained of the inadequacy of the pension of \$480. The average wage of laborers was \$34 a month in the West, and \$40 was not enough to keep him. Sergt.-Major Guilfoyle said he would make an exception in the case of the higher commands which had usually been secured by merit, but there were cases where the company officer was the social inferior in private life, and often depended on a n.c.o. while in the service. "The present pensions act is not favorably received by the rank and file, and we are anxious to remove grievances and to prevent their recurrence."

### Waited Eight Months For Pension.

Pte. Hodgson gave details of his own case, where he said he was eight months before he got his first pension. "My papers were lost for a long time, but were found at the office of the A. D. M. S. in an old box thrown aside." He was not medically examined when his pension was reduced from \$16 to \$8 a month.

Mr. F. F. Pardee—You have not been examined yet?—No, sir; it was a case of my being seen with my clothes on. Mine was a guess case.

Another proposal of Sergt.-Major Guilfoyle was that all alien enemies now in the country be deprived of the franchise for at least the next five years. "Those men in Saskatchewan have the majority of the votes, and these alien votes will be detrimental to the soldier. Once a German always a German." It should be done by legislation.

### Taking Away Titles.

Hon. Chas. Murphy—Your legislation would follow that in the old country, where they are taking away the titles of the Duke of Albany and the Duke of Cumberland?

Witness—Should have been done long ago. (Laughter.)

Hon. Chas. Murphy—I quite agree with you.

The coldness of the receptions given to returned men was mentioned and witnesses thought a Government Reception Committee should be appointed in each centre. "The only reception a soldier gets in some places now is from the porter and his wife and children; that is occurring perhaps, by the public becoming so familiar that the spirit of the welcome is dying." Sergt.-Major Guilfoyle and Pte. Wells both believed men would go on the land if a suitable scheme were worked.

Mr. W. A. MacDonald of the Edmonton Veterans' Association was questioned at some length by the Chairman, Sir Herbert Ames, about the numerous complaints of returned men about questions of pay. Witness stated categorically that nine out of ten returned men had never had a satisfactory statement of their pay. The only certain case was where a man had taken the precaution of getting a duplicate of the Government paybook. The pay question was causing a lot of dissatisfaction.

### Some Mistakes, but—

The Chairman—This matter of pay has come in many times. Have any men given reasons or expressed the belief that their pay statement is not correctly prepared? Do the men suspect or believe that their pay statements in England or here have been incorrectly prepared?—Undoubtedly, in some cases they do.

Do they think it was a mistake or that it was deliberate?—I may say in some cases they think it was deliberate.

Have you any specific cases of men who believe they were deliberately done out of money?—No, I have not.

Do you hear men say they think there was dishonesty? I hear that.

### Dishonesty Alleged.

The allegation is made that there has been dishonesty?—Yes, when talking about things amongst ourselves; the thing remains in some men's minds.

Where would that be, in England or in Canada? So far as overseas men are concerned in England and in France.

In what way do they think they are getting a raw deal?—I suppose it is that they think the paymaster is helping himself.

You have heard that suspicion expressed by returned soldiers—Yes. Frequently—No, not frequently but sometimes.

Have they ever been able to present anything tangible in support of that suspicion?—I have never taken the matter up.

### Delay in Pay.

The Chairman—I think you would be conferring a favor on this com

mittee, and on the public generally, if you have proof of that kind, to let us have it. What has been the chief trouble about pay, delay?—Yes, delay.

Mr. J. H. Hill of the Returned Soldiers' Commission, Victoria, B.C., spoke of work on the Pacific coast. Out of 680 positions found by them, only nineteen were of men who went on farms. They had to secure an average of ten jobs for every seven men.

### Pay Correct to a Cent.

Mr. H. W. Hart and Mr. W. Dringman of the Returned Soldiers' Association of the Province of British Columbia, gave evidence. They had no complaints about pay in British Columbia, as all was quickly settled by direct reference to the Paymaster. In the case of Mr. Hart he said his pay was exact down to the last cent, including exchange.

These witnesses complained of exploiting methods they said were being used at Winnipeg, where returned soldiers had no part in the bodies. In British Columbia fifty per cent. of the men returning there did not originally come from that Province. Capt. Brown of the National Council of the Y. M. C. A. also gave evidence, and the committee closed its session until it re-assembles to consider its report.