

RETURNED MEN ASK FAIR DEAL

Say Government Ought to be More Generous

PENSIONS TOO SMALL

Want Labor Bureau for Returned Soldiers — Criticism of Patriotic Fund—Various Requests Made in Resolutions.

Returned disabled soldiers aired their grievances at a public meeting in Massey Hall last evening, presided over by his Worship Mayor Church. They complained that the Government was dilatory, that the Patriotic Fund officials were unsympathetic and that **alien enemies** were being employed in munitions factories to the exclusion of the returned soldiers. They urged the establishment at once of a civic employment bureau for returned soldiers and reorganization of the pension system of Canada. The meeting was not largely attended, probably because it was not widely advertised. There were less than 1,000 people present.

Mayor Criticizes Government.

Mayor Church was most severe in his condemnation of Government management of the returned soldier problem. The pensions, he said, were "shameful pittance," the Patriotic Fund was improperly administered, and the men on the Hospital Commission were "a lot of amateurs."

"What is wanted in this country," declared the Mayor, "is more consideration for the returned soldier. It is the greatest problem facing the country. There have been too many useless Commissions appointed by the Government. There is no reason why all these matters could not have been handled by a department of the Government."

The Mayor protested against the handling of the food parcel system by the Red Cross, which work, he maintained, should be done by the Government. A Canadian prisoner in Germany, he said, had a first mortgage on the country, and should not be looked after by any institution. All the Y. M. C. A.'s in the country, he said, should be closed up and turned over to the returned soldiers. (Applause.)

Bureau for Complaints.

His Worship strongly advocated the establishment of a civic bureau, to which, he said, all complaints of returned men should be brought. "I cannot get the Board of Control and the City Council to give me the help I want in this work," he announced amid cries of "Shame."

The administration of the Patriotic Fund and the Hospitals Commission also came in for the Mayor's condemnation. The civilian, he said, got his cheque regularly at the end of the month, but the relatives of the man overseas had to wait sometimes two or three months for their money. The Hospitals Commission, he said, was composed of a lot of well-meaning men, but they were a lot of amateurs. Surely, he said, the country could provide good physicians for the returned men and make the scheme a department of the Government.

"The returned soldiers," he continued amidst applause, "are not getting a fair show from the Government. It is a disgrace to the Dominion of Canada the way they are being treated. There are millions of dollars to sink in bankrupt railroads and no money for returned soldiers."

Against Alien Labor.

The meeting was opened by Sergt. Warwick, 3rd Battalion, who explained that twice had the Grievance Committee been disappointed by the Board of Control, who made appointments to meet them. There was considerable applause when he excluded Mayor Church, who, he said, had always been on hand to listen to grievances of the returned fighters.

A resolution, moved by Mr. S. E. Graham, returned soldier, and seconded by Mr. N. H. Macintosh, asked the Dominion Government to stop the importation of **alien enemy** labor from the United States, to exclude them

from munitions plants and places where war contracts are being filled, and have the vacancies filled by returned men or A.R. men, British subjects and subjects of the allies, and that reasonable wages be paid.

"Would Have Been a Yell."

There would have been a big yell from the manufacturers of the country, said Mr. Graham, if at the beginning of the war the Dominion Government had constructed its own munitions plants and had made these **allens** work in them. Instead of making big money in munition plants, the speaker declared, they should be drawing the same rate of pay as British subjects interned in Germany. He asked the audience if they thought it was a square deal to put up to any returned man to ask him to go to the wilds of New Ontario or any other new country and go farming. (Loud cries of "No.")

"It is pretty hard lines," he concluded, "when to get a job in a munitions factory a returned man first has to take off his returned soldier's button."

Waiting for That Letter.

"It is a crying shame that a resolution of this kind is necessary at all," declared Mr. Macintosh. He said that the returned men who visited various munitions works in search of **alien enemies** had requested from one concern in particular a letter disclaiming their desire to employ **alien enemy** labor. "We are still waiting for that letter," he said.

"You'll wait a long time for it," exclaimed a woman in the audience.

Preference for the Needy.

Sergt. McFarlane of the Headquarters Staff, Exhibition Camp, submitted a resolution urging that in munitions plants and other places where war contracts are being filled preference be given to women whose earnings are needed for household expenses, rather than to women who are merely working for pocket money. This was carried unanimously. Sergt. McFarlane declared that he passed a munitions factory every morning, and saw society women being taken there in motor cars and carriages, with footmen to open the carriage door for them. "Why should women in silk dresses be employed in munitions factories, while returned soldiers and soldiers' wives are out of employment?" he asked.

Hardships On Wives.

Corp. Brown complained of the management of the Patriotic Fund, and asserted that officials of the association were unsympathetic. He told of one soldier's wife who had been put out on the street by a bailiff, while her husband was in hospital. His story prompted the meeting to pass a resolution urging the Ontario Government to enact legislation making it illegal for a landlord to cause a bailiff to persecute soldiers' wives who are unable to keep up their payments.

Pensions Criticized.

Another resolution asked the Dominion Government to at once reorganize the Pension Board system of Canada, and abolish the present system of political patronage, and urged that returned soldiers and A.R. men be given first consideration. This was followed by a resolution asking the Dominion Government to remove from office all officers, non-commissioned officers and men holding positions on the Headquarters Staff who are eligible for overseas service, and who do not intend to go to the front, and that vacancies be filled by returned soldiers or A.R. men.

Ask For Employment Bureau.

Perhaps the most important motion so far as Toronto men are concerned was one asking the City Council to open an employment bureau as soon as possible for returned soldiers, with a returned soldier at the head of the bureau, the object of the bureau to be "to secure employment and attend to the complaints of returned soldiers."

The concluding resolution complained that the Toronto branch of the Patriotic Fund had cut off allowances of soldiers' wives who go out to work.