

WAR VETERANS DEMAND THAT PATRONAGE SYSTEM BE KILLED

Returned Men Air Many Grievances and Pass Seven Resolutions
—Would Protect Soldier's Wife From Landlord
—Mayor's Severe Criticism.

One thousand returned soldiers, A. R. men, and their sympathizers met in Massey Hall last night and demanded a square deal and decent treatment for the men who come back from the war disabled in body or brain. They spoke out in no mincing words, in fact some of their statements were too strong for newspaper publication, and they demanded reforms embodied in the following resolutions:

Resolutions in effect as follows were discussed and passed unanimously and will be forwarded on to the proper authorities:

1. That the Dominion Government stop the importation of alien enemy labor from the United States.
2. That a committee be appointed by the city to co-operate with the returned soldiers to visit and inspect all places where labor is employed.
3. That the City Council open an Employment Bureau for returned soldiers, and that a returned soldier be placed in charge.
4. That in munition plants preference be given to women whose earnings are needed for household expenses rather than to those who desire pocket money.
5. That the Dominion Government be asked at once to re-organize the Pension Board System of Canada, and do away with the present system of political patronage.
6. That the Dominion Government be asked to relieve from office all officers, N.C.O.'s, and men holding positions on the military staff who are eligible for overseas service and that all such vacancies be filled by returned officers, N.C.O.'s, and men or A.R. men.
7. That steps be taken by the Government to secure a fair and uniform method of distributing the different moneys disbursed by patriotic fund branches throughout Canada.

A fair proportion of Toronto's soldier citizenship assembled at Massey Hall last evening to speak its heart and publicly air accumulated grievances. Mayor Church, as chairman, guided the meeting through the passing of seven grievance-correcting resolutions, which were discussed and passed unanimously.

The Mayor bitterly attacked the Government, called the Hospitals Commission "a lot of amateurs," condemned the Patriotic Fund administration, the handling of the food parcel work by the Red Cross, spoke of pensions as "shameful pittance," and declared that all the Y.M.C.A.'s should be turned over to returned soldiers.

When some dissension was imminent and questions were being asked as to whether the Soldiers' Grievance Committee was working for or against the Great War Veterans, the Mayor promptly closed the meeting by calling for the National Anthem to be sung.

"Cannot Make a Living."

Sergt. Warwick explained the circumstances leading up to the formation of the Grievance Committee. "We have men, returned from the front, who cannot make a living," he began. "Comrades, nothing breaks my heart more than to see what is here before me to-night. We must remember we have a problem to solve which must not be left over. We must conquer our indifferences and quicken our sympathies; we must get 'our men' justice and a fair chance."

E. Graham, moving a resolution that the Dominion Government be asked to stop the importation of alien enemy labor from the United States, said that complaints had been made by A. R. men that they could not secure available positions in munition factories. When they took off their buttons their chances of getting a position were bettered. "It's pretty hard lines, I say," said the returned soldier. "If the Government had interned all alien enemies from the start this would not be so. We should ask the Government to build a plant of their own and employ these aliens, not let them compete with our men of the Empire." (Cheers.)

"Is that a square deal?" Answers of "No! no!" "Let them put the alien enemies on the clay belts, and when our men come home let the Government give the land to them."

N. H. McIntosh, who followed, said it was a crying shame that such a resolution should be necessary. "But what shall we do with the alien enemies?" he asked.

Here's a Threat.

Another voice: "After several munition factories have been blown up they'll do that."

"We have asked one munition firm," continued Mr. McIntosh, "for a letter stating that they will give preference to A. R. and returned men. We are still waiting for that letter."

Feminine voice: "You'll wait a long time. Shame; shame."

"And not only in the munition factories but in places where food is prepared, aliens should be cleared out. How easy it would be for them to poison the food." The speaker said he had an unsigned letter from a re-

turned soldier stating that the firm above-named almost invariably paid less to A. R. and returned men than to their alien enemy employees.

Mayor is Severe.

Mayor Church believed most of the trouble encountered by the returned soldiers was due to the heartlessness of officials who had certain authority. "What is wanted in this country is more heart from the officials," he said. "Those going to the front and those returning should be handled by a department of the Government. A Canadian prisoner of war in Germany should be a first charge on the country for anything he needs. It should not be left to any private organization to send parcels to the men in prison camps. The Canadian Government should not depend upon the Red Cross or the Y. M. C. A. There should be a Government department which should look after soldiers specially. We also need a civic bureau in Toronto to handle complaints."

"My office," continued the Mayor, "is besieged with people all day long, and I can't get the board of control to give me the help I want. (Murmurs of "shame, shame")."

"I believe that the Minister of Militia should appoint an inspector to investigate complaints against the Hospitals Commission. The Select Committee in the Senate who took up the question of hospital administration are a lot of amateurs. There are too many civilian attendants for the soldiers up at Spadina Crescent Convalescent Hospital. The city of Toronto is rich enough to get proper doctors—the country should pay for it."

"As to pensions, I can safely say that the returned men are not getting enough. Eight dollars a month for Pte. Marten is a disgrace to the Government of Canada. They have put him on the streets and made him a charge on the common public. (Further cries of "Shame, oh, shame!")"

Millions to Railways—Pittance to Men

"I say the pension scheme is all wrong. They have millions to give to bankrupt railways, yet they have only a miserable pittance to a man who has lost an arm. It's an outrage, a shame, a disgrace!"

"As far as aliens are concerned, I believe there should not be an alien enemy in any factory in Toronto, nor should any of them have a vote while the war is on."

Sergt. Geddes followed with an impassioned denunciation of alien enemies who walk the streets of Toronto. "No one ever had a grander and more noble subject to talk on than we have to-night, yet the back rows and galleries are empty, when we can get a foreigner to come here and draw a full house with a mere song and dance—there's something wrong."

Give Soft Jobs to Soldiers.

"Returned soldiers should not be asked to go on the farms. They want to be in touch with human hearts. They would get despondent on the lonely fields. There are enough soft jobs around the cities, and they should get them. There are 2,500 Canadian boys behind German bars. The more you help the returned soldier the sooner you are going to get those boys out of the dirty prisons."

Sergt. Warwick: "No man who has not been at the front should be allowed to look after the welfare of returned men."

Sergt. McFarlane: "I have seen women come to one munition factory in their cars, with private footmen, while poor soldiers' wives, who need the money, can't get jobs. Those same ladies have spoiled thousands of shells because they are incompetent. I say fire them!"

Save Her From Landlord.

Sergt. McFarlane moved that the Legislature be asked to make it unlawful for a landlord to destrain on a soldier's wife for default of rent.

"It would be quite fair legislation in view of this war," commented the Mayor.

"How about stopping the landlords from raising the rent?" asked R. Amos from the centre of the house.

"I think it would be more effective to bring such matters before a public meeting like this and show the landlord up. It would take too long to get that legislation."

The motion was passed without amendment.

"Why don't the grievance committee act in co-operation with the War Veterans' Association?" asked a returned soldier from the gallery.

"Because we need bread and butter now, and we've got to have it. We can't wait for the A.R. club or the veterans to act," replied Herbert Williams from the platform. "Our aims are identical, but we need speedy results."

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