

# WANT PROBE INTO SOLANDT'S METHODS

## Veterans 'Allege Unjustifiable Treatment of Soldiers and Dependents.'

After general criticism of the administration of the Manitoba Patriotic fund, and quoting specific instances of alleged unjustifiable treatment of returned soldiers and their dependents, the Great War Veterans, at their general meeting last night in the London block, unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the provincial government to investigate the methods followed by D. M. Solandt, the secretary of the fund.

Two instances were also related where Mr. Solandt was alleged to have acted in accordance with representations made by members of the association, but Secretary Fred W. Law and President Robert B. Maxwell pointed out that all cases should be treated on their merits, and should not require the backing of any organization.

President Maxwell declared that the policy of the association with regard to all patriotic funds was that outlined by Dominion Secretary N. F. R. Knight during his recent visit, namely, to put them all out of commission and place the responsibility of looking after the welfare of returned soldiers and their dependents on the Dominion government, where it belonged.

### Quotes Specific Case.

Secretary Law, without quoting the name, read a letter from a returned soldier. The man stated that he returned five weeks ago, bringing with him his three children. His wife had borrowed \$80 from the Patriotic fund, arranging to repay it by monthly instalments of \$10. The Patriotic fund did not send any allowance for December, and the soldier had to borrow \$15 with which to purchase clothes for his children, having lost the children's baggage on board the ship. Being unable for lack of funds to purchase coal, the soldier tried to heat his house with cordwood, but his supply of that was now low. He did not ask Secretary Law for money, but the latter immediately ordered fuel to be sent to the soldier's home.

Secretary Law pointed out that the letter was received by the same mail which brought one from the Civic Charities Endorsement bureau, declining to recommend the city council to grant the G.W.V. a donation of \$1,000 on the ground that the association was largely fraternal, and that there was in existence an efficient organization which looked after the welfare of returned soldiers and the dependents of soldiers serving overseas.

### Alien Labor Problem.

Before the late federal election the G.W.V. forwarded a resolution to Premier Borden, asking in the event of his being returned to office that he would have introduced a measure for the conscription of alien enemy labor, the pay to be at military rates, and the difference between the \$1.10 and the current rate to be paid direct by the employers to the government, to be used for war purposes. After a long discussion last night, Secretary Law was instructed to forward the resolution again to the premier, with a request that the latter define the attitude and intentions of the Union government on the question.

Comrade Campbell remarked that the matter was very urgent, and immediate action was necessary if the necessary labor was to be forthcoming to enable the farmers to put in the biggest crop in the world's history. President Maxwell emphasized the difficulties inherent in the problem, although strongly in sympathy with the motion. As an alternative, he favored the enforcement of a clause to be incorporated in the Defence of the Realm act, by which alien enemies declining to work at current rates should be fined \$10 for every day they remained idle, with the alternative of going to jail.

President Maxwell, after being reminded by a member that the farmers should all decline to pay more than a reasonable rate of wages, said that was a matter for the farmers' unions. If the government conscripted alien enemy labor at \$1.10 a day, some provision would have to be made to support the wives and families of married aliens. Also, a large administrative staff would be required, and there was the argument presented by certain labor leaders, who pointed out that when the farmers were paying \$3 a day for help, they were getting only about \$1.10 for their wheat, while today they were assured of \$2.21, based on Fort William, which meant \$2.03 actually received by the farmers.

### Membership Over 3,000.

Applications from 77 new members were approved, bringing the total membership up to 3,187. The application for membership received from Sergt. Charette, anti-conscription candidate for the constituency of Springfield in the recent federal election, was referred to the executive. Warm acknowledgment of the financial assistance given by various chapters of the I.O.O.F. was expressed, and also of the action of a farmer from Gilbert Plains, who desired to remain anonymous. He had walked into the secretary's office, and after explaining that he had decided to give \$1,000 towards patriotic purposes as some slight recognition of what the fighting men had done to safeguard Canada and those at home, handed over a cheque to Secretary Law for \$500, and then sent \$400 to the Red Cross and \$100 to the I.O.O.F.

After discussion and explanation by several members, Secretary Law was instructed to write to the military authorities, requesting that the utmost consideration should be shown to the draftees at Minto street barracks, especially during their initial training, and that they be treated exactly as if they were volunteers. Veterans declared that the draftees might include some men who had to be sent to fight, but there were others who would have joined as volunteers if not prevented by circumstances over which they had no control. The volunteers had commenced the job, the draftsmen would finish it, was the generous statement by several members.