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THE CASE OF PRIVATE HUSSIN

The case of Private Hussin is not settled yet. As The Advance suggested a week or two ago it will not be settled—cannot be settled—until this unfortunate soldier is dealt with fairly and justly and on his merits.

Jos. A. Bradette, M.P. for Temiskaming North, brought this matter again before the attention of the Dominion parliament last week while the House was in committee of supply. Mr. Bradette had some difficulty in getting the matter before the committee. First he introduced the question when the matter of salaries and contingencies for the Dept. of Pensions and National Health was under consideration. Hon. Murray MacLaren, the Minister of Pensions and National Health, had just suggested that the item of salaries and contingencies for his department be allowed to stand and other matters be taken up. The committee had not voted on this nor was there general agreement in any formal way. Mr. Bradette thought it a good time to again press the case of Private Hussin. He was satisfied he was in order and in this he was supported by several parliamentarians well versed in the usages of the House. Eventually, however, he was asked to take his seat until the matter of the suggestion of the Minister that the question be allowed to stand might be decided. Mr. Bradette with his usual desire to be courteous resumed his seat. The committee decided not to give him opportunity to speak at that time. He simply bided his time, however, and when the next item in connection with the Dept. of Pensions and National Health was called, Mr. Bradette pressed the case of Private Hussin. Hussin, he pointed out, was of Belgian origin, and was among the early volunteers joining the Canadian Expeditionary forces. At Valcartier he was inoculated and following the inoculation he lost the use of one arm and has never recovered from this disability. When he was discharged as medically unfit for overseas service Hussin went on his farm in the Porcupine district and there for sixteen consecutive years carried on the work of a pioneer settler and farmer, never asking for any help from the Government. But two years ago, Mr. Bradette continued, Hussin found he could not support himself and family in his disabled state, and he made application to the pension board to have his arm examined. Mr. Bradette recalled having brought the matter to the attention of the Minister of Pensions last year, the Minister being kind enough to refer it to the pension board. Hussin was sent to the Christie street hospital for the second time. His trouble was diagnosed as hysterical paralysis. He was discharged as cured from Christie street hospital, but instead of being cured he was but the more disabled. Mr. Bradette referred to the undoubted sufferings of the unfortunate Hussin, and he mentioned editorial articles in The Advance and The Toronto Globe as fully supporting what he had said in regard to the case. "They urge" said Mr. Bradette in referring to the newspaper articles, "not so much upon the Government, as upon the board of pension commissioners, the re-opening of the case. It is really a sad spectacle, and although I am a poor man I would gladly pay the travelling expenses of this unfortunate ex-soldier to have him brought before a committee of this house so that the medical men and the members here could see for themselves just what his condition is, because there is no doubt whatever that the man is absolutely helpless. He is entirely without the use of one arm and is utterly unable to get employment in the mines, nor is he able to work on his own farm. I have no hesitation in mentioning these facts because I think it is important for the house to have the information. I know the minister is sympathetic to the case, as will be seen in the fact that only last fall he found it advisable to send the man back to Christie street hospital. I repeat, I would gladly pay all expenses of this man in order to have him appear before a committee of the house. If hon. members could see him they would agree with me that he is not a hypocrite; he is not play-acting but is actually a cripple. To send him back to Christie street would be a crime. He is afraid of the treatment he received there, and he knows from past experience that he cannot be cured of his present ailment."

At this point a member interrrupted to suggest that there were special means for making proper diagnosis at Christie street hospital, but Mr. Bradette had no hesitation in replying that the diagnosis was wrong. He pointed out that the people of the North are intelligent and that all here who know the facts of the case are convinced that Hussin has not been treated fairly. He protested against the treatment accorded Hussin and appealed to the fairmindedness of the members as to whether it was not simple justice to have the case re-opened so that Hussin may receive the pension he deserves. "I can assure the Minister," Mr. Bradette said, "that the case is not settled so far as the people in that section of the country are concerned. I know that the Minister of Health has been trying to deal fairly with these cases but I must tell him in all frankness that we are not satisfied with the present situation so far as this case is concerned. Some remedy should be found for this man's condition. I have sufficient confidence in the Board of Pension Commissioners and in the minister himself to believe that this matter will be taken up again, not in two or three years' time, not in two or three months, but immediately. If the minister wants the newspaper articles to which I have referred I will send them to him, just as I did last fall. Strong editorials have appeared in The Porcupine Advance, an independent Conservative newspaper which has taken up this question. That newspaper has discussed matters pertaining to Northern Ontario and has always kept its articles on a high level. It does not play politics, and there is certainly no room for politics in this particular matter. It is one in regard to which the house should be properly seized of the facts. Hon. members may say that this is only an individual case, but I would remind them that individuals make up the collective community. I know that some veterans who have not suffered nearly so much as this man have received compensation from the board, and were entitled to it. We are satisfied that they should have received the compensation they were given, but it is our opinion that there should be a general rule applicable to all alike. And this applies more forcibly to the case I have just brought to the attention of the minister."

Hon. Murray MacLaren replied to the effect that the considered opinion of the medical examiners had been that Private Hussin had a case of hysterical paralysis. Mr. Bradette apparently disagreed with this diagnosis. Hon. Mr. MacLaren, however, promised to have the whole matter reinvestigated. "I will ask that the matter be gone into again," said Hon. Mr. MacLaren. "I repeat, however," he added, "that I do not wish this to be interpreted as an opinion on my part that they were wrong or anything of that kind; on the contrary I know that the matter has been carefully studied for a considerable period." Hon. Mr. MacLarent, however, made one unusual suggestion, this being to the effect that he did not wish it to be considered that appeals should be taken to the Minister to have put right. The Advance believes that the Minister is in his place for that very purpose—to see that justice is done—to prevent red tape, or prejudice, or any other improper factor, from causing unfairness or injustice to the humblest ex-soldier.

In presenting the case this week The Advance has quoted Mr. Bradette at much length because he presented the whole case so ably and so eloquently. There is, perhaps, one point he did not emphasize, and that is a very important one in the consideration of the case, and that is the fact that the treatment at Christie street hospital injured, rather than helped the unfortunate soldier. Before the treatment the disabled arm was useless, but after the pretended cure it was worse—it was painful and worse than useless—it was so much further disabled that it made the unfortunate man unable to work with the good arm left him. The Advance believes that it is the duty of the Minister of Pensions to guard the interests of the unfortunate Private Hussin against the possibility of some prejudice or other unfairness in the case of the military doctors. The Minister might do worse than accept the generous offer of Mr. Bradette to bring Private Hussin before the committee of the House so that the medical men there and the members who use their own intelligence may see the actual condition of the suffering man. The Advance does not believe there are many members of parliament who would not be touched to the heart if they but saw Pte. Hussin and noted his evident suffering and disability. The Advance, indeed, believes that if Hon. Mr. MacLaren were but to see Pte. Hussin the case would be promptly settled, because it would be settled right.

In the meantime, this reference can not be better concluded than with another quotation from Mr. Bradette's presentation of the case to the committee of the House. "I want to add another word," said Mr. Bradette. "I am prepared to make the statement outside parliament that in this case the doctors were wrong. In the first place, they were not unanimous in their diagnosis. One doctor, indeed, reported that the condition of the man was pitiful, and the final word of the Board of Pension Commissioners was that he was suffering from hysterical paralysis. The diagnosis has now been changed to that of malingering. They have no right to make such a statement in connection with this man. There is no hypocrisy about him and he was not trying to malinger. I do not understand why this was said about this man. Surely parliament should be able to deal with this matter if these doctors or the commission cannot. Considerable dissatisfaction has been caused in my section of the country by this judgment. I am not a medical man but I know it would be impossible for Private Hussin to do any work. That would be impossible because one of his arms is absolutely helpless. Five hundred doctors could not make me think that that man can use his arm. There was no need to use the word "malingering."

PRISONERS and UNEMPLOYED

Prisons and jails are being discussed in the press these days. More than one member of parliament pretend that they would give the prisoners in the penitentiaries better days and nights—more artistic quarters, more radios, gramophones, books, cigarettes, and so on, and less punishment of any kind. There are those who have actually pressed the idea at the present moment that prisoners should be provided with useful work at fair rate of pay so that they might keep their families in some measure of comfort during the days the prisoners are paying the penalty for their breach of the law. Of course, the families of prisoners in this country are never allowed to starve. Charity prevents that. But apparently the idea of some of these reformers is that the stigma of charity should be removed from the families of prisoners. The present seems a most unfortunate time to suggest this idea with tens of thousands of honest, upright, law-abiding men and women eating the bitter bread of charity because there is no work. If the Government can make work anywhere or anyhow for anybody, their care should be the thousands of decent and innocent who suffer to-day because of the lack of employment.

In the matter of town, city and county jails, The Ottawa Journal has recently been carrying on a campaign asking for betterment. The Journal claims that many of these jails are uncleanly, uncomfortable and no credit to a civilized country. The Journal may have the truth of the matter. In any event there are many county jails that deserve condemnation. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the district jail for this section of the North does not come under condemnation in any of the lines urged against other jails for lack of cleanliness, sanitation or comfort. The Journal does present one argument against practically all county and district jails—the lack of sufficient work to do to keep the prisoners from deterioration and evil habits. Work is essential to the salvation of the prisoners, The Journal claims. Without useful occupation there can be little hope for this betterment to say nothing of the ill effects on health and minds by the enforced idleness in jail. The Journal no doubt would at once provide work for all in jails and prisons. What about the unfortunates who have observed the law? Is it only the perverse and the evil who are entitled to any consideration any more? With such ideas, is it any wonder the world seems out of joint? Has it come to the pass where only the law-breaker may have the surety of the comfort and joy of work, the benefit of good food and housing, the privilege of full medical attention and the happiness of supporting the family?

The Advance admits the truth of many of the suggestions made about life and work in the jails. But it seems to be a matter of starting at the wrong place. First provide work and comfort and joy for the tens of thousands of honest, honourable, decent, law-abiding people, now in need and then it will be time enough to worry about those who have refused to play the game. If idleness is such an evil to the criminal, should unemployment be allowed to burden and depress the good people who obey the laws and rules of society? Is a certain or uncertain Toronto newspaper to be successful in its pernicious plan of founding a new social order under which only the law-breakers have special consideration and where privileges are extended only to the undeserving? Jails and prisons may remain no better than they are without serious consequences, but it does seem imperative that honest folk within the law should be provided with work so that they may live almost as well as some people would have the thieves, rogues, murderers and degenerates.

GRAVEL AND SAND—AND PLACER

Under one plea or another these days in nearly every country on earth effort is being made to secure government by a noisy minority.

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Hon. Mr. Guthrie has introduced a bill to prohibit the importation into Canada of revolvers and pistols. This is as serious an effort to curb free speech as Section 98 of the Criminal Code.

* * * *

Why all the excitement about the "framing" of a convict at Toronto? Why not a little righteous indignation at the injustice to an honest, decent, patriotic man like Private Hussin, of Drinkwater Pit? Why sit quiet and allow the "framing" of Private Hussin.

Last Week's Doings in the Legislature

Appropriation for Northern Development Nearly Halved. Fish and Game Matters Before the House. Member for St. Patrick's Hits Back at Critic.

For the third successive session, a bill to give threshers liens on the grain they harvest, by which they would obtain their money before other creditors, was defeated in second reading in the Ontario Legislature. Support was expressed by its sponsor, Wm. Newman, Liberal, Victoria North, and Austin Smith, Conservative, Essex South, the latter having introduced a similar bill last session.

Hon. T. L. Kennedy, Minister of Agriculture, could see no assistance to the farmer in the measure, while Premier George S. Henry concluded the opposition who also felt there was no particular advantage to the farmer.

Hon. William Finlayson, Minister of Lands and Forests, introduced his measure for appropriation of $3,000,000 for Northern Ontario, the amount being $2,000,000 less than in other years.

The Game and Fisheries Committee heard representations from various sportsmen and hunting organizations in urging the return to use of dogs in hunting deer, the chief spokesman favouring the dogs being Elmer Davis, of Kingston, who contended the present law prevents older men, and maimed war veterans and others with physical limitations who seek to enjoy the sport of deer hunting. Huntsmen also petitioned the committee for a buck law with severe penalties for those who shoot does and fawns.

The report of the special committee appointed in 1931 by the House to inquire into the game situation was tabled by Hon. G. H. Challies, Minister of Game and Fisheries, suggesting that the department be brought under a separate member of the cabinet with portfolio, that the Tourist and Publicity Bureau be allocated to the Department of Game and Fisheries, that the Act be codified and extricated from misunderstanding, and that power be reserved to the department to regulate regionally as the condition of game or fish in any district may demand restriction, open season or lengthening or shortening trapping seasons. Co-operation with the Province of Quebec is urged in regard to prohibiting sale of wild duck and partridge in the open market, more uniformity in the game laws of the two provinces, and definite marking of inter-provincial boundary upon waters of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers. On the question of guides, the report asks departmental regulations, for standard of qualifications, and specification of work in which employment of guides shall be compulsory. For infractions of the laws on Crown game preserves, the report suggests increased penalties and imprisonment for repeating offences. No recommendations were made on the question of use of dogs in hunting deer.

The bill to prohibit publication of discriminatory matter, sponsored by Argue Martin, Con., West Hamilton, was given second reading and sent to the Legal Bills Committee, at the suggestion of Premier Henry. E. F. Singer, Cons. St. Andrew's, Toronto, supported the measure, in sounding a warning that catastrophies may spring from the stirring up of hatreds, and that nothing was more likely to bring about disorder than public advertisement of prohibitions against classes in a community. At the same time, the bill was opposed by Wilfrid Heighington, Cons. St. Davids, Toronto, who contended that while there may have arisen some unfortunate incidents, yet the legislature should not approve the principle of the bill. Mr. Heighington felt the spirit of British fair play would exist and wipe out such difficulties.

Second reading was given to the bill introduced by W. E. N. Sinclair, Liberal-Opposition leader, which would abolish grand juries, the measure going to the Legal Bills Committee at the suggestion of Attorney-General W. H. Price, who believed there should be more data and opinion secured on the question. At the same time, Col. Price indicated that there may be legislation to abolish the function of coroner's inquests in certain criminal cases, where it is felt criminal proceedings would automatically follow without the coroner's inquest being held. Mr. Sinclair charged grand juries are a useless appendage to the criminal court system, while Col. Price admitted that their recommendations were not taken seriously and their functions not discharged efficiently. The bill, he felt could be simplified, and any action taken by Ontario would be in conjunction with the Federal government.

E. J. Murphy, Con., St. Patrick's, Toronto, denied the allegation made by Gordon Waldron, K.C., that he (Mr. Murphy) had received a fee for introducing a bill to the Legislature which would abolish the present Optometry Commission, and at the same time Mr. Murphy is appearing as counsel before the commission for optometrists. Mr. Murphy termed Mr. Waldron's imputations as "dastardly, vile, malicious and untrue," offering to withdraw from the House pending discussion on the question. Premier Henry observed that he was pleased to have Mr. Murphy make such a clean-cut denial of the charge, pointing out that the House has its dignity to maintain, and that nothing attached to the member in the incident.

Premier Henry also read to the House a message he sent to Governor James Rolph, of California, expressing the sympathy of the Province and the Legislature in the loss of life and destruction caused by the recent earthquake.

Yarmouth Herald:—One wonders why they talk of the benefit of the St. Lawrence Waterways Development as a transportation aid when we have two railways that are not paying expenses.

The Canadian Legion in the Porcupine

By One Interested in their Welfare

The Old Pack-Sack

Will we veterans of the Great War, 1914-1918 live to see another conflict in the same area? Despatches of the present day carry hints of another war with the Germans the aggresive party. "Old Bill's flag has been raised again in that country and the militarism of the Kaiser's day has been recommenced. Correspondents of foreign papers are being told to leave the country and the happenings previous to 1914 are being re-enacted. Will the warning be heeded.? During the space of the fifteen years following the completion of the last war there have occasionally been rumblings heard about the German land forces. Rumours have been spread that thousands of men had been seen drilling but upon investigation nothing was found to substantiate the statement. Sir Ian Hamilton, the veteran general of the British Army, recently addressed a gathering of returned soldiers in England. During the course of his speech he mentioned the situation in Germany and its apparent menace. He then went on to say that the next war would not be of long duration. There would not be much trench warfare; it would be a war of transportation forces. The one who could get its men to the main positions first would be the winners. He reviewed the headway made in motor transport, aircraft transportation and the motorized artillery to uphold this contention. When men of such high standing speak so plainly, we of the old guard should begin getting the old pack-sack ready, if not for ourselves on account of age or disability, for those who are able to step forward. The same old pack-sack can tell some tall stories also. For the information of the reader who may wonder what the pack-sack was used for it can be truthfully said:—everything, except the "Nissen Hut" or the farmyard billet. To give a list here would take too much space, besides every man carried something more than his partner. There were some pack-sacks used by those of long and vivid experience which would weigh no more than a few pounds. On the other hand the "Good Old Sergeant-Major" took good care that the newly arrived were duly and effectively initiated into the art of pack-sack carrying, even to the extent of letting him carry up the major's blankets as a special favour. Sometimes those who mastered the art, were given a rude jolt, more especially when the S.-M. cracked his knuckles on the wood with which these experts used to make the pack very attractive-looking and heavy. It therefore will be joy to the boys to know that the next war will find the "Old Pack-Sack" thrown on a lorry along with the men and all given a free ride. To those fellows who had dealings in the artillery and ammunition columns with the friend of the horse lines—"The Mule"—it will be great news indeed to learn the fact that their efforts at handling these "loving and docile pets" went for naught as the artillery will be motorized. Taking everything all round the next war looks like being a "joy ride" compared to the one in which we took part.

Another Excuse

The other day I approached a resident of town who has long service to his credit, regarding putting in an application to join the branch of the Canadian Legion here. It had been my privilege to try the same party once before and at that time was put off with the excuse that "he was thinking about it." This time the excuse was "I am waiting to see who are going to be the officers." This returned soldier took the right attitude in the first place by the suggestion that he was thinking about joining. It would be a grand thing indeed if every returned man who has not yet joined the Legion would begin to think about joining. With a little though on the subject, taking into consideration the work already accomplished; they many happy re-unions with pals of days gone by ,and the hundred and one other facts concerning the Legion, there is not the slightest doubt that there would be a rush to get in. In fact it does not need any concentration of thought; the facts of what the Canadian Legion has done for the betterment of returned soldiers and their dependents speaks out loud for itself. Why think about it? Join now! Then the other excuse comes forward: "I am waiting to see who are going to be the officers." This also has its wisdom for it would be folly indeed for a person to join an organization, whose ruling body did not have the standing and position such a body should have. The argument, however, put forward against this is that had the man joined up when first approached he would have had opportunity to pick and choose those whom he thinks should be in power. The review published in this column last week gives one a fair idea that those who have governed the Legion affairs in Timmins during the years past must have had all the qualifications necessary to be good officers or else the standing and success achieved would not be so notable. It has been said that some have petty grievances against certain members. The Legion as a whole is a service organization—"service for those who cannot help themselves" and "Comradeship for all." Forget your troubles with your neighbour, come in among your old comrades. Yes, you'll run across one or two, maybe, right in the Timmins branch at that. Join now in time to pick and choose your own officers for next year.

Coming Events

Reference has been made of the fact that the ballots for the election of executive officers for Timmins branch have been mailed to all members, with a stamped addressed envelope enclosed. This is to remind Legion members that these ballots must be returned not later than next Saturday (March 25th).

The annual general meeting of Timmins branch 88, Canadian Legion, B. E. S. L., will be held on Monday, March 27th, in the Oddfellows' hall at 8.00 p.m. sharp. It has been suggested that there will be the largest attendance of members present for this meeting of any yet held. It is to be hoped this will be the case. Previously when this statement has been spread, the attendance was just the reverse. Let everybody make a try to attend. The newly-elected officers will feel then that they can go forward with the confidence of all behind them. As a gentle hint—"It's Monday, at 8.00 p.m. in the Oddfellows' hall, Timmins.

The evening of Saturday, April 9th, is drawing near. What's that? Why! Vimy Night—the big night of the year for the Timmins branch. Yes, it's also in the Oddfellows' hall and will start about 7.00 p.m. This column may be in a position to give you a definite outline of programme next week, but in the meantime jot down the date—Saturday, April 8th.

RUSSIA FALLING DOWN ON HER LUMBER CONTRACTS

The following is from the last issue of The Canada Lumberman and should have more than passing interest for Canadians, and especially North Land people:—

Russia is falling down in her delivery of lumber to Britain and things are much more hopeful in the lumber industry now than they were a month ago, said S. F. Rutherford, president of the Montreal Lumbermen's Association.

"Things are not as bad as they were," said Mr. Rutherford. "There are seven boats loading at maritime ports for Britain with Canadian lumber. I do not know how many feet exactly are involved, but the amount is encouraging.

"Any chance of Quebec getting some business when the St. Lawrence opens?" he was asked.

"I think so," he said.

Lumber traffic being water-borne, there is little chance of much inland timber moving till the river is open.

"I am optimistic," said Mr. Rutherford. "Another very hopeful factor, is that lumber is not reaching Britain from Russia in the quantities expected. I do not know what the cause is, whether Russia cannot deliver it or not, but I do know that the timber is not coming from the Soviet in the anticipated quantities."

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