

National

"TO CARE FOR HIM WHO HAS BORNE THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW AND ORPHANS."

WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, JULY 24, 1884.

VOL. III—NO. 50.—WHOLE NO. 154.

ESTABLISHED 1877.—NEW SERIES.

THE GRAND ARMY.

Opening of the Eighteenth Annual Encampment.

GEN. BEATH'S ADDRESS.

An Eloquent Appeal for Justice to the Soldier.

LET THE DEBT BE PAID.

The Rapid Growth and Healthy Condition of the Order.

COMRADES: A year ago, at the base of the Rocky Mountains, upon whose snow-bound crests many of us then looked for the first time, we congratulated each other on the grand work of a notable year in the history of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Attaining by your suffrages this high position, I felt deeply the great honor conferred, and realizing to some degree the possibilities of the future, I asked that you would again rally around the standard of our National Encampment, so that it would represent before my term of office closed 250,000 members!

How large such figures appeared to those who had stood by the Grand Army in its days of depression; yet we felt attainment possible, and we parted, each to do his share toward such results.

Now, in the 18th annual session of our National Encampment, we meet in this beautiful city of the great Northwest to again exchange congratulations on the work more than realizing the hopes of a year ago.

Because of the ability and zeal of the officers of Posts and Departments, and by reason of devoted labor of the individual comrades there has been added to our rolls over 74,000 members, and to-day our numbers exceed 250,000.

What an army this! We rejoice that names that will live in history as great leaders—Grant and Sherman, and Sheridan, Rosecrans, Logan, and Sigbee, and hundreds who bravely led corps, divisions, or brigades, and worthily won and wore their stars—are on the rolls of the Grand Army to-day, and as in days of war the rank and file of a patriot army made the fame of our generals possible, so in these days of peace we rely confidently on our rank and file, on the men who filled all positions from drummer boys to generals, and who are to-day the busy, patriotic citizens, with a stronger love for a country they were privileged to serve, and who by their works have made our association grand in numbers and influence as well as in name.

With pledged hearts, with every encouragement for the future, let us to-day devote ourselves to worthy represent the Grand Army of the Republic.

The reports of the staff officers will show fully the operations of their several Departments, and I commend these to your careful consideration.

All of the officers have performed their duties in a thorough and satisfactory manner, pleasing to myself and with benefit to the Order.

MEMBERSHIP.

The returns for the quarter ending June 30 are necessarily incomplete, but gains reported by the Departments for the quarter makes the total membership at that date 253,895.

On March 31, 1883, 32 Departments reported 2,775 Posts and 146,183 members. On March 31, 1884, 36 Departments reported 4,323 Posts and 253,295 members, a gain in these 12 months of four Departments and 1,748 Posts and 67,412 members.

This embraced the last quarter of Comrade Van Dervoort's term, when there was an unusually large increase.

All the Provisional Departments have been formed into permanent Departments, and a representation from each is confidently expected at this Encampment.

FINANCES.

I cordially agree with the Quartermaster-General that there is no good reason for a further increase of funds at National Headquarters.

By the repayment (for the first time) of all express charges and a reduction in prices of supplies we have afforded some relief to Departments, but a still further reduction can be made.

Considering this matter you will take into account the large numbers of blanks furnished without charge to Departments and the distribution of the Journal each year, as well as the necessary clerical expense required for the general business of such an organization.

INSPECTIONS.

The Departments generally are assuming expenses of stated and systematic inspections, and there is no work that will pay better in good results. Hitherto, wholly, or in a large degree, the expenses have been borne by individual members or collected from Posts, but this is unfair to the comrade who cheerfully gives time and labor, and burdensome to Posts; these most needing official visits being least able to pay the expenses.

An inspection directed by Department Headquarters and at its expense is the true plan; the Posts will in nearly every case cheerfully provide for the comfort and entertainment of the Inspector.

To help in this let the National Encampment afford all possible relief to the Departments, and thus directly to Posts and members.

OFFICIAL VISITS.

At the beginning of my term I knew it would be impossible for me to attempt any rivalry with the record of Comrade Van Dervoort, or of Comrades Merrill and Wagner, who immediately preceded him, as to the number of miles traveled on official duty, and I felt that their excellent work would possibly answer for awhile in that direction.

I have, however, been able to attend Post or Department meetings in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Washington, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky.

Some of the Departments I was enabled to visit three or four times in connection with my business, and at little cost to the Grand Army. Without a single exception my visits were received exceedingly pleasant by the kind-

liest courtesies on the part of officers and comrades of the Posts or Departments.

Outside of these Department visits, I have had the great pleasure of meeting the National Officers of the Woman's Relief Corps, and of visiting with them that touching memorial of the Grand Army work, the Soldiers' Home, at Chelsea, Mass.

On the 4th of July I was in attendance at the unveiling of a Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in the city of Buffalo, and in the evening was a guest at the banquet tendered by the ladies of Buffalo to the Department Encampment of New York. The galleries of a large hall were crowded with spectators, and the floor space was covered with tables, where were seated 1,300 comrades or their friends, waited on by wives and daughters of leading citizens.

In all my experience I never witnessed a grander spectacle than was there presented, and never had more cause to feel proud of this Grand Army. In thanking the ladies for their presence and work, and congratulating the officials and citizens of the city of Buffalo on the completion of the costly monument erected in honor of our dead, I referred to the fact that before this great work was accomplished, the Legislature of the State, at the request of the Grand Army, had provided by generous appropriations for maintaining a Soldiers' Home, so that our sick, destitute and unfortunate comrades might be gathered from their own poor homes, or from the almshouses, and, as the wards of a grateful people, spend their remaining days in peace and comfort, surrounded by all that brotherly love or patriotic solicitude could suggest and provide; assured that from the inevitable end should come, that their poor battered bodies would receive the honors of a soldier's funeral, and they would not fall part of a pauper's grave.

And so, my comrades, I say to you, here is work for all other Departments of the Grand Army. Let us take up as a rallying cry, "Homes for our heroes," and we shall not call on a patriotic people in vain.

BADGES.

We have issued 50,500 membership badges during the year. The presentation of a badge to the recruit in our impressive muster-in service has contributed largely to this result, and the profit to Posts, Departments, and the National Encampment has aggregated largely for all at a trifling expense to any member.

There has been some newspaper criticism on this head, to which it is doubtless my duty to refer, though I am personally comforted by the reflection that my predecessors have been favored with the same solicitous attention. This matter has, however, gone somewhat further than the usual and now monotonous, ill-natured fault-finding, and it is time to call a halt. I have asked the committee of the National Council to satisfy themselves in their own way, and so that they could speak with authority, whether it is true that Comrades Hartman, Robinson, Bernhart, Wagner, Merrill, Van Dervoort and myself, as Commanders-in-Chief, have willfully deceived the Grand Army. That committee will report to this Encampment.

If this critic is right in the statement that we have palmed off on our comrades spurious badges, then we all—more than the others—deserve your severest condemnation; if he has willfully misstated the facts, he merits your censure.

I should feel deeply humiliated if I thought it necessary in this Encampment to meet insinuations affecting my honest conduct of this high office. I have earned the right to demand from all my comrades their fullest confidence in this respect.

It has been a serious matter to secure the supply for cannon-metal badges. We had been exceedingly fortunate in obtaining so much, under all the circumstances; but it was feared that we should have to report to this Encampment that we could do no more in this direction.

Official requests, made frequently during other years, always met with the same reply, that the cannon metal was exhausted; Congress had voted away much more than could be supplied.

We ascertained, however, that some of the associations to whom cannon had been donated had not called for them, or were satisfied when supplied with iron guns instead of bronze.

During this year I made other efforts, saw for myself quite a number of rebel guns that would just serve our purpose, and then finally, through the good offices of Department Commander Alexander, of Washington, our request for the sale to the Grand Army of ten thousand pounds of cannon metal for badges was granted, and the necessary transfer will be completed in a short time.

We are to have the privilege of selecting the guns, so that all anxiety on this score is removed for four or five years, even if the large demand for badges is maintained to each edition.

We are greatly indebted to the Honorable Secretary of War, Robert T. Lincoln, and the Chief of Ordnance, Gen. Stephen V. Benet, for this valuable concession and privilege.

DIGEST OF DECISIONS.

The Baltimore Encampment ordered a reprint of all decisions of the Commander-in-Chief and Judge Advocate-General. Such a work was prepared by Judge Advocate-General Carnahan, but through some oversight only three hundred copies were printed.

On ascertaining this fact, I asked Comrade Carnahan to take charge of issuing a new edition, and he suggested adding to each edition the section of the Rules and Regulations referred to, and the form of court-martial, which was accordingly done, and the work as completed is of great value to every officer of the Grand Army. It will save much correspondence, and enable Commanders to pass at once on the many points incorporated in this Digest.

Ten thousand copies were printed, under contract, and copies issued, without charge, to all Posts and Departments.

Comrade Carnahan is entitled to thanks for his courtesy and attention, and for the able manner in which he discharged a laborious task.

DECISIONS.

The following decisions were made after consultation with the Judge Advocate-General. A number of inquiries were addressed direct to the Commander-in-Chief or Judge Advocate-General, and returned to the writers with notice to present the questions to their Department headquarters:

I. Is the Surgeon of a Board of Enrollment eligible to membership in the G. A. R.?

Answered, No. The position of Surgeon of a Board of Enrollment was purely a civil one; the holder thereof was not mustered into the active military service of the United States.

II. Case—A comrade joins the Grand Army

under an alias, having no papers to show that he enlisted or served under this name. What is his position in the G. A. R.?

Decided.—That application for membership must be in the real name of the applicant. An applicant who obtains admission to the G. A. R. under an assumed name practices a deception that may probably be made the subject of charges and specifications.

III. Case—An applicant for membership on transfer was rejected.

(a). Should his transfer card be returned?

(b). Should the fact of such rejection be indorsed thereon?

(c). Can he apply to another Post without the consent of the Post rejecting him?

(d). If not so admitted is he honorably discharged at the end of 12 months, notwithstanding the rejection?

If not honorably discharged, what is his relation to the G. A. R.?

Decided.—That the rule governing the rejection of applications for membership does not apply to applications on transfer. Therefore, the card is to be returned to the applicant without indorsement. He can apply to any other Post or Posts without consent of the one rejecting him, but this fact is necessarily shown on his application. If not admitted to a Post within 12 months from date of transfer, the comrade stands honorably discharged from the Order, notwithstanding the fact of previous rejection.

IV. Case—Under the By-Laws of a Post, one-third of the dues were transferred each quarter to a relief fund, to be disbursed by a Board of Relief, the Post Quartermaster being Secretary, and a Treasurer being elected by the Post.

On motion to so transfer \$100, the Post Commander decided the motion out of order, as contrary to the Rules and Regulations, which made the Quartermaster custodian of the funds of the Post.

His decision was appealed from, and was sustained by the Post.

An appeal was then forwarded to these Headquarters.

Decided.—That the Quartermaster is the lawful custodian of the Post funds, and no By-Law can be held as valid which diverts those funds from his hands to the custody of another. The decision of the Post Commander and of the Post is sustained.

V. Is an applicant who enlisted in Sept., 1865, eligible to membership in the G. A. R., under the ruling of the Supreme Court of the war of the rebellion did not close until Aug. 20, 1867?

Answered, No. The Rules and Regulations require an applicant to have served in the war for the suppression of the rebellion between April 12, 1861, and April 9, 1865. Our rules were so amended to meet the decision of the Supreme Court referred to.

VI. Has a comrade who has been honorably discharged from the Order a right to visit a Post whilst in session?

Decided.—No has not.

NATIONAL HOMES.

The committee appointed at the last Encampment to secure the establishment, by the Government, of a Soldiers' Home west of the Mississippi, have performed their duty with great success, and will report in detail to this Encampment.

The establishment of a Home in that large section is a most excellent project; but the great value of this measure is that it enlarges the present system, which provides only for those disabled in the service. The committee proposed in this bill the provisions that all honorably-discharged soldiers and sailors of the war of the rebellion, who, by reason of illness or disease, are incapable of earning a living shall be entitled to all the benefits of the Home, whether the disability was incurred in the service or not.

As Congress has also in this bill recognized the justice of admitting ex-sailors and marines to the benefits of this Home, I recommend that the Encampment memorialize Congress in favor of the modification of the existing statute, so as to admit our comrades of the Navy to equal privileges in all the Homes.

COMRADES OF THE NAVY.

Comparatively a small number of our sailor comrades have joined the Grand Army. Lately, however, especially since the formation of the Naval Post-Graduate School, composed exclusively of men who served in the Navy, there has been an increased interest in this class. They now realize that the Grand Army gives hearty welcome to all who on sea or land fought under the flag of the Union.

I was asked during the year to assist in the project of raising funds for the establishment in Virginia and North Carolina of Homes for Confederate veterans. Believing this to be outside the line of my authority, and that I had no right to commit the Grand Army in any matter not in the line of our declared objects, I could only say that the proposition would have to be before the National Encampment.

WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS.

I deemed it a duty to call personally on the National Officers of the Woman's Relief Corps in Boston, to ask if there was any service which we could render in the prosecution of their work. I also met on several occasions their efficient western organizer, Mrs. Kate B. Sherman, S. V. P., and in all these interviews was deeply impressed with the fact that they had in themselves the ability and resources to carry out the details of organization, and that what they most needed from us was the expression of our hearty appreciation of their work and of sympathy in their objects.

They are now much further advanced in organization in this one year than the Grand Army was in the same time.

Comrades who doubted the wisdom of our taking any action last year will soon see that this Woman's Relief Corps is to be our Grand Army Reserve, ready to respond for efficient help in all our social and charitable work.

No one can more heartily appreciate than myself the duties imposed upon Posts in our work of charity, and we can rely on that being always foremost in our objects; but I am deeply impressed with this thought, that as we grow older, and as our ranks shall become thinned, we shall be drawn more closely together. We shall cultivate the fraternal features of the organization more and more; and here again the loyal women are to be our efficient helpers; our wives and daughters and other friends are to enjoy with us the pleasures that mean so much to ourselves—these meetings and Reunions of men who fought under the old flag nearly a quarter of a century ago.

And in this connection I rejoice in the development of a strong desire among our Posts to have

pleasure of our members. We sing most heartily with Comrade Parker, of Lynn, "We are the Boys," and when in the words of his song we add "who marched and fought in '61" we are forced to admit that time is having some effect, and that we no longer climb to the top story of a high building as readily as before the war. And so the old Post halls are being abandoned, and in their place rooms of easy access are being provided and adorned with flags and guidons and all that can please the eye and add to our comforts.

I could name a score of Posts whose efforts and success in this direction may seem marvelous, but their achievements are within the compass of the majority of Posts, in a greater or less degree.

CAMP-FIRES.

I would most heartily recommend that at stated intervals the citizens generally of the community in which each Post is located be invited to attend Camp-fires or open meetings, and that every effort should be made not only to entertain them pleasantly, but to keep fresh in their minds the memory of the services which the veterans rendered in their defense. A new generation is growing up who without your tuition can have no proper conception of the magnitude of the struggle or the vital importance of the issues involved.

I trust no Post of the Grand Army will countenance the holding of picnics or Camp-fires on the Sabbath. There have been instances of such that have brought disgrace on the Grand Army, and all of them are injurious in their tendency.

SONS OF VETERANS.

At the last Encampment the following was adopted:

Resolved, That we will with pleasure all organizations having for their object the perpetuity of the memory of the brave men who were engaged in the Sons of Veterans of the United States of America one that is entitled to the confidence and respect of the comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic.

When this resolution was presented to the Encampment I looked on it as general in its character and applicable to any of the organizations embraced in the term Sons of Veterans, and remained under this impression for some months, until the publication of correspondence between a comrade interested in that work and the chairman of the committee.

I then learned that the intention was to positively recognize one branch styled as the "Sons of Veterans of the United States of America" to the exclusion of the other known simply as "Sons of Veterans."

If any statement explaining this difference in their titles was made to the Encampment it escaped my observation and that of quite a number of members with whom I have conversed, and being satisfied that there is a very general misapprehension of the effect of the resolution, it is well that you should now understand the distinction then and there made.

In the constitution of the branch recognized by this resolution the following defines

ELIGIBILITY TO MEMBERSHIP.

SEC. 1. First Class. The sons, not less than eighteen years of age, of deceased or honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, or marines, who served in the United Army or Navy during the civil war of 1861-1865, shall be eligible to membership in the First Class; also, upon attaining the prescribed age, the eldest lineal male descendants of deceased members of the First Class, and if there are no descendants, male or female, then the male heirs of such deceased members in the collateral branches of their families in the order of regular succession according to the rules of descent.

SEC. 2. Second Class. The eldest sons of living members of the First Class, not less than eighteen years of age, shall be eligible to membership in the Second Class, and upon the death of a member of the First Class, through whom eligibility is derived, a member of the Second Class shall become a member of the First Class.

SEC. 3. Third Class. The eldest sons of living members of the Second Class, not less than eighteen years of age, shall be eligible to membership in the Third Class, and upon the death of a member of the Second Class, through whom eligibility is derived, a member of the Third Class shall become a member of the Second Class.

And in the "Sons of Veterans" the Camp Officers are Captain, Lieutenant, etc.

The Division (or Department) Officers, Colonel, etc., after regimental formation.

The Grand Divisions are Commander, Lieutenant-Commander, etc., with rank of Major-General to Lieutenant-Colonel.

The Commander-in-Chief with Commander-in-Chief, etc., as in our National Encampment. There is provision made for conferring "Brevet Rank" for special services.

The following is presented by the "Sons of Veterans":

ELIGIBILITY.

SEC. 1. Lineal male descendants above the age of sixteen years, of deceased or honorably-discharged soldiers, sailors, or marines, who served in the United Army during the war of the rebellion, provided that they or their fathers have never borne arms against the United States, shall be eligible to membership.

I am at a loss about making any recommendation, and deem it preferable to call on some of the comrades who have been specially engaged in this work for a full explanation, so that the Encampment may direct what is best to be done. I feel sure, however, that if the Grand Army is to assume other relationships to the Sons of Veterans, U. S. A., we should insist on the complete abrogation of the many high-sounding titles that have been distributed with lavish profusion, and that they should be required to wear a uniform that will not be confounded with that of the G. A. R.

In closing this part of the report I ought not to omit mention of the devoted and unselfish labors in perfecting the organization of the Sons of the U. S. A. branch by our comrades, I. S. Baugs and W. E. W. Hoos.

THE PENSION OFFICE.

In General Orders, No. 4, it was announced that over 200,000 applications for pensions were on file awaiting evidence from claimants; thousands of these were delayed in settlement by inability of applicants to ascertain the addresses of their officers or comrades, and as a means of aiding these, the Commissioner of Pensions, Comrade Dudley, requested the help of the Grand Army, by our furnishing, on cards issued for the purpose, the name and address of each comrade, with his company, or regiment, or vessel.

These, arranged by regiments and States, would make a directory valuable for such a purpose, and large numbers of our Posts responded promptly to the request made in this General Order, but many others failed to realize the importance of the work, and have not yet made any returns.

I am informed that up to July 9, the addresses of 12,438 comrades had been furnished in 1,895 cases, and the requests for addresses

made steadily increased since publication was made of this fact, and quite a number of cases have been settled through these names.

I trust that each Department or Post officer present will realize the good that may ensue to many deserving comrades by our early completing this work, and I believe it will prove to be a good plan to furnish all our Posts with extra cards, so that the names of all recruits for this year can be added.

Whatever the Grand Army can do or suggest to hasten the settlement of all just claims ought to be done heartily and speedily.

SPECIAL RELIEF FUNDS.

In October last several telegrams were received from Pensacola, appealing for aid for sufferers by yellow fever. We were not able to obtain particulars except that their necessities were pressing. Knowing that the Grand Army Posts were weak in numbers, but that there was quite a number of the soldiers who had located at the navy yard, I issued a call for help in General Orders, No. 2.

The response was the contribution of the sum of over \$3,000, more than could be possibly needed, unless the disease spread to many other points where we had Posts. After sending several drafts for \$100 each, and failing to learn definitely of the actual needs for further help, I instituted inquiries and became satisfied that we had there done all that was necessary. Accordingly contributors were notified they could receive their pro rata of the moneys subscribed, on demand, the balance not called for to be reserved as a special relief fund. This was fortunate, as when disastrous floods swept away thousands of many of our comrades we were able to respond immediately to calls for help, and so sent moneys to Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia. Money was also sent to Pittsburg, simply as a return of sums contributed to the yellow fever fund by them and which could be of immediate service to sufferers by the floods in that section.

I also tendered assistance to the Department of Indiana, but received the reply that they would rely altogether on the help of their own Posts.

I here make the suggestion that a Department in need of assistance in any public calamity, ought not to call on the other Departments except through National Headquarters.

We had money enough on hand to give all needed assistance to the weaker Departments, and as the Commander-in-Chief can in most cases make close investigation into the necessities for such help, it ought to be distinctly understood, should any similar misfortune occur, that relief will be sent only through these Headquarters.

The balance of the relief fund should now be invested at interest in saleable bonds of small denominations, to be used exclusively for general relief.

NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

I take pleasure in reporting that during the year THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, of Washington, D. C., has sent out over two hundred and fifty blank applications for charters for Posts, in response to requests of its readers. Most of these applications were returned duly filled up to the various Departments; but 56 applications, with the fees, were returned through the office of THE TRIBUNE and by them properly forwarded.

The work done by this and the other soldier papers in disseminating information relative to the Grand Army has been of great value to our organization.

From several sources I have received complaints of improper references in political meetings or the public press to the Grand Army of the Republic; and I have been asked to interfere in some way, and prevent if possible any harm being done to our organization by thus associating us with any political movement.

I answered to the effect that we had provided in our laws in terms that no one need misunderstand:

No officer or comrade of the Grand Army of the Republic shall in any manner use the name of the Republic for political purposes, and no discussion of political questions shall be permitted at any of its meetings, and no resolutions for political ends be made.

I further stated that any comrade so offending would be brought to account. There is no evidence that this rule has been violated.

We all understand the necessity of guarding against the introduction of political questions, which would most surely divide us; but beyond providing in such plain terms and having it known that we purpose carrying out the law, we cannot go.

We cannot be responsible for every indiscreet utterance in conventions or on the stump. The Grand Army is a general term, often used when it can have no application to our association, and we cannot muzzle every speaker or suppress the reporter. Let it be understood, too, that we have not surrendered all rights as citizens, others have, or stay at home. We have a right to attend political meetings, take part in them, and, as a nominee, be the subject of the plaudits of the side of the abuse of the other. All these things we may do as citizens, but not in any way because of membership in the Grand Army.

There is one point on which a word of caution may be proper. Each comrade may wear his Grand Army badge when and where he pleases, but I submit that the wearing of the badge at any political meeting is in bad taste. Let each one, therefore, refrain from this.

The association of men of all shades of political belief in our Encampments and Posts, in all our Reunions, as to-day, proves to all who have eyes and ears, that this Grand Army is not in any manner a political organization.

PENSION LEGISLATION.

In accordance with a resolution adopted at the last session of the National Encampment, Comrades George S. Merrill, Louis Wagner, Paul Van Dervoort, Surgeon-General Ames, and Charles H. Grosvenor were appointed a Committee on Pensions.

Comrade James Tamer was afterwards appointed to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Comrade Ames.

The Encampment gave no special instructions to this committee, but had taken action upon one important proposition—that asking for "a pension of \$8 a month to all honorably-discharged soldiers of the Union army who are not now drawing a pension;" upon which the Committee on Resolutions made an adverse report, and which report the Encampment sustained. This positive action bound the Committee on Pensions, and should have been respected by all Posts of the Grand Army.

Your committee, as the representative of over 200,000 men, was met by the most perplexing and momentous questions. How to select from proposed legislation that which would do the greatest good, and on which there was a probability of securing favorable action by Congress, was a problem which demanded their most careful considera-

tion, and I think they solved it wisely and well.

I shall enlarge here only upon one feature of the report of the committee—that demanding that soldiers and sailors who are now disabled and dependent on others or who are 65 years of age, should be pensioned without having to prove that such disability was the result of service.

WHAT IT WOULD HAVE ACCOMPLISHED.

The passage of such a bill would have benefited thousands of cases pending before the Pension Office, would have benefited the Posts who are largely caring for this class, and would have prevented many a good soldier from going to the almshouse; but because the committee declined to demand an equal pension for the able-bodied soldier it has been bitterly assailed.

Men who have never been called on to represent any one in your councils, assume the right to be the judges of what the committee ought to have done, and to defame comrades who have spent years in your service. On this personal consideration I need not dwell, for these attacks sink into insignificance beside the injury inflicted on those whose interests we are solemnly pledged to guard—namely, such of our former comrades-in-arms as need help and protection, and the widows and orphans of those who have fallen.

The committee represented the Grand Army; if it or I have done wrong we are here to answer. But that must be decided by you, and by God alone.

A MISQUOTED POST.

Unwisely giving ear to opinions and counsels proceeding from no recognized authority, over a thousand Posts are recorded as favoring House Bill No. 6103, which reads:

Resolved, That all honorably discharged soldiers and sailors who served in the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps of the United States for a period not less than twelve months, between March 4, 1861, and July 1, 1865, and who were honorably discharged therefrom, shall receive a pension of \$8 per month during the remainder of their lives. This act shall take effect from its passage.

It is good public policy on the part of the Government to treat liberally those whose valor alone prevented its overthrow, and the precedent for service-pensions was established by the Government in pensioning the survivors of the Revolutionary war and of the war of 1812, and the grounds of service solely in the Mexican war, and doubtless ultimately, in pursuance of this same policy, and when the necessities for such a course have become pressing, all survivors of the United Army and Navy who took part in the suppression of the rebellion will be placed on the pension rolls.

LET THE DISABLED COME FIRST!

This would, no doubt, preserve and strengthen the ranks of the disabled, but I submit that it does not become those who are suffering from no disability and are able to earn a living; those of us whose proud boast it has always been that in rallying to the defense of our beloved country we were engaged in service solely for patriotic motives, to demand service pensions so long as any of our comrades are in actual need, by reason of old age or physical disability, and not in receipt of a pension.

When this Government shall have fulfilled all its contract obligations to the soldiers and sailors of the late war, and when nowhere in all this land is seen a veteran begging bread or asking out a miserable existence from the almshouse, then, and not till then, should those of us who are still in the enjoyment of health and strength, and are not dependent upon others for support, present claims for pension on the ground of military service.

THE PENSION OFFICE'S CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS.

It is my own judgment that the influence of the Grand Army should be exerted as a unit to secure the fulfillment by Congress of the actual contract obligations of the Government to its soldiers and sailors, to wit:

1st. Their right to a pension from date of honorable discharge because of disability, without regard to the time of filing claim.

2d. Their right to such provisions of bounty promised by the Government as the length of their service entitled them to receive when honorably discharged for disability before the expiration of service.

3d. Their right having "borne the battle" and received an honorable discharge) to pension if they are now or shall hereafter become disabled, and such settlements must necessarily extend over a series of years, their fulfillment need not add in the slightest degree to the burdens of the tax-payers, of which class our veterans form no inconsiderable number, but will simply insure the devotion of a part of the surplus revenues to the payment of honest debts long overdue.

There is yet another side of this question. Meeting fully my views, I place upon John A. Andrews Post, No. 15, of Boston, upon Posts or comrades who have knowingly sustained that Post in this action the responsibility of having impeded and stopped just legislation for the soldier.

I lay upon them the full responsibility of depriving the widows and children of our dead comrades of the alms of children of our "National Debt," hundreds in helpless condition, with no claim save upon those who had pledged themselves to care for the widowed and fatherless, and this duty to cherish and protect such fell upon the loyal women of