

PLEASE

DO

*May 15,
1931.*

The Financial Trust
NOT
to the Admiralty.

Then **ATTEMPT** *to*

I have
TO *arranged with the Special*
Secretary to raise the case
of Edward **COPY** *(late of*
Harwich Training School), on
the adjournment for Wednesday
next, May 20th.

PAGE

*Very yours,
Fred Douglas*

THANK YOU

PLEASE



DO

A.G.

Please see the attached letter from Mr. Longden, M.P., which states that he intends to raise the question of the boy Bennett on the adjournment on Wednesday, 20th May.

NOT

Would you, in conjunction with the M.D.G., please furnish a ~~summary~~ fairly comprehensive Brief for the Parliamentary Secretary (who would like it not later than Tuesday.)

ATTEMPT

TO

Mr. Longden's case will presumably be that the boy entered the Navy in splendid physical fitness and after a comparatively short period left it a physical wreck and the local doctor finds no trace of anything that might suggest that the boy has inherited the trouble.

COPY

It is also stated in N.L.2854/29 (M.D.G.'s minute of the 1st October) that the boy was under observation both at the hospital and on the school attending list, practically the whole time he was there and that he was

THIS

PAGE

of

THANK YOU

PLEASE

DO

of "sub-normal mental development". This would seem to require some explanation in view of the fact that he passed a strict medical examination on entry.

It might be as well to obtain a copy of his medical report on entry.

Will you please explain any medical terms used, e.g. "aphonia".

TO
COPY

A. E. Stoyne Cox
16/5/31

A statement is attached.

THIS
[Signature]
A.G.
19.5.1931.

Parliamentary Secretary

PAGE

THANK YOU

PLEASE

DO

Case of EDWARD BENNETT, late Boy, 2nd Class.

NOT

Bennett joined the Navy in October, 1925

at the age of 15 years and 8 months and served in

H.M.S. "GANGERS" until 23rd April, 1926 when he was sent

to the R. N. Hospital, Haslemere. He was invalided on

ATTEMPT

the 2nd June, 1926 on account of Mental Inefficiency

certified by the Medical Board of Survey to be not

attributable to the Service. As he was discharged prior

TO

to attaining the age of 18 years, and had therefore no

service counting for pension, he was ineligible for any

award under the Disability Pensions, etc. Regulations in

COPY

respect of his invaliding in Service cases and the

If it had been possible to regard the

invaliding as attributable to the Service he would have been eligible

THIS

for an award, either temporary or permanent, up to a

maximum of 32s.6d. a week, according to the degree of

PAGE disabament/

THANK YOU

PLEASE

- 2 -

DO

disablement. see Section III, paragraph 2, page 174,
Navy List Appendix.

NOT

It has been claimed by the relatives that he
was entirely fit in mind and body when he joined, that he
was a physical wreck on discharge and that this condition
was due to his service in the War. It is stated that

ATTEMPT

the Boy had no inherited tendency to disease and it is
suggested that he suffered from ill-treatment at Shotley.

TO

The case has already been very carefully
investigated in connection with repeated appeals from
Mr. Longden, but it has been decided by the Board that
there are no grounds for regarding the invaliding
disability as attributable to Service causes and the
suggestion of ill-treatment is entirely repudiated. -

COPY

Papers N.L.706/29., N.L.294/29. and C.L.26/29.

THIS

From the medical point of view the Admiralty
case is as follows:-

PAGE

During the period of six months that Bennett

was/

THANK YOU

PLEASE

- 3 -

DO

was receiving instruction in R.M.S. "GANGERS" he was under medical observation both in Hospital and on the attending list practically the whole time. He frequented the Sick Bay with minor or imaginary complaints almost daily. His Divisional Officer reported that he considered him

NOT

(Bennett) to be of a very low mental development, his manner being peculiar and his natural state one of extreme dirtiness. At instruction he was extremely dense and dull-witted and only obtained 13% of marks in a very low class, and showed no signs of progress. He was reported during the period for several disciplinary offences. As it appeared that he was unlikely to make an efficient Seaman he was, in April, 1926, discharged to the R. N. Hospital, Chatham, for observation and treatment. Whilst in Hospital it was noted that his expression is dull and "heavy. He is mentally slow and contradictory in answering questions and is below the average intelligence".

ATTEMPT

TO

COPY

THIS

PAGE

Is an official document of the Admiralty and is not to be distributed outside the Admiralty.

THANK YOU

PLEASE

- 4 -

DO

In a letter written to his mother he stated "if I am
 "lucky I may get my ticket as I am trying to work it"
 'Ticket' signifies discharge from H.M. Navy. After a

NOT

period of observation in Hospital it was decided that he
 was mentally inefficient and below the standard required
 for H.M. Navy. As stated above he was surveyed and

ATTEMPT

invalided on the 2nd June, 1926, the findings of the
 Board being that this condition existed prior to entry
and that it was not attributable to his short period of
Naval training. No actual physical defects were noted,

TO

except that there was slight weakness of one group of
 muscles of the left leg. When Bennett, in accordance
 with the usual procedure, was given the opportunity of

COPY

stating his own case on invaliding, he did not claim that
 his condition was a result of any injury received at
 Shotley, but simply stated "Toe hurts when walking.

THIS

"Born with it". Since his discharge from H.M. Navy there
 is no official information as to his progress, but

PAGE

medical/

THANK YOU

PLEASE

- 5 -

DO

medical evidence furnished with an appeal in 1929 showed that he had suffered from Nervous Debility, Aphonia (loss of voice) - probably hysterical - Halls and Neurasthenia.

A further certificate in 1930 confirmed that the loss of voice was hysterical and also stated that he had had weakness of one arm. Previous reports have stated that

the Boy arrived home a physical wreck. When he left the R. N. Hospital, Chatham, he had no physical defects, except the slight leg weakness previously mentioned, and

his subsequent history, so far as it is known, suggests that certain disabilities from which he has since suffered are of functional origin, i.e., they arise from his nervous condition, for which the Service is in no way

responsible. His letter to his mother showed that he

wished to leave the Navy. The London's letter of 15th August, 1929, states that Bennett was then "very much

"mentally alive". If so, it can only be surmised that

PAGE

his/

THANK YOU

PLEASE

DO

His previous dullness and stupidity were deliberately assumed. His Officers and Schoolmasters had reported

that he was making no progress, he failed his examination, and was not likely to become a useful member of H.M. Navy.

NOT

The inference that because there was no evidence of nervous inheritance, such as he suffers from now are necessarily attributable to his Naval service is

ATTEMPT

not accepted. Physical examination on entry can give but a limited idea of mental capacity, particularly in a youth.

TO

This is judged mainly by his results when doing some simple sums and dictation. A more prolonged period of

observation after entry showed that his mental equipment was not sufficient to benefit by further instruction and on these grounds he was discharged.

COPY

It is possible that the question of Appeal Tribunals will again be raised in the course of the discussion.

THIS

The views of the Admiralty (and of the other

PAGE

Service/

THANK YOU

DO

Service Departments) in this matter are shown in the accompanying papers:-

(a) Note of proceedings on an occasion of a Deputation from the British Legion received by the

Parliamentary Secretary on the 21st July, 1927;

(b) Copy of former reply to the Deputation - Admiralty Letter of 18th August, 1927; and

(c) Note of proceedings of Deputation from the British Legion to the War Office - 8th November, 1929.

COPY

19th May, 1931.

THIS

PAGE

THANK YOU