

War Veterans' Allowance Act

before the veterans affairs committee the increase was raised to 25 per cent. I feel the minister, being the person who has championed that way of doing business, should not refuse to do the same thing and thus be the first one to break that great tradition. He was one of those who insisted on that course.

I do not believe he really considers that if this had been sent to the veterans affairs committee the measure would have been delayed more than one week. This would not have delayed the payment because the measure is effective from November 1. It would not have changed the total amount the veteran would receive. I do agree these men should get these cheques before Christmas. If I thought there was a chance any substantial number would not get their cheques before Christmas I would feel differently. However, I have such great confidence in the department over which the minister presides, their efficiency and their ability to do a great job under pressure, that I am satisfied if the measure had been referred to the committee the cheques would have been delayed only a matter of three or four days at the most. They would have been out in plenty of time for Christmas.

I should like to refer to the question of permitting absence from Canada for only six months. As has been stated already, this only goes as far as the social welfare legislation we have already passed. I do not believe the minister would have wanted to limit himself in that regard, and I do not know why he did limit it to that. I shall not take the time to give citations, but the minister knows that the members of his own party took the attitude that it was not treating the Canadian veteran fairly to cut off his allowance when he had to go outside Canada to preserve his health. When this government introduces a measure and does not go any farther than they have just gone in respect of old age pensions, old age assistance, then they are going back on the representations they made in veterans affairs committees and on the floor of this house that where health reasons took a person out of this country he should not have his allowance cut off.

Had the minister referred this measure to the veterans affairs committee it might have been possible for this government to do as previous governments did, reconsider these provisions and do a better job for the veteran. I regret very much, Mr. Speaker, that my good old friend and colleague, after all the work he has done for veterans, should have been the first one to bring in a bill which does not carry out some of these important matters. I hope that during such time as he

may occupy the bench he occupies now he will not be put in that position again.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, the members of this group will continue their non-partisan approach to veterans affairs matters, and will approach them in a spirit of co-operation. I must say I was very interested in the review of the legislation made by the minister. I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Rosthern (Mr. Tucker). We support this bill on the principle that three-quarters of a loaf is better than none. We are very glad that the amendments contained in the bill will benefit the veteran.

I must say, however, before proceeding that I thought the preceding speaker indicated a quite unnecessary measure or superfluity of righteous indignation.

Mr. Tucker: Only the members of the C.C.F. are virtuous; we all recognize that.

Mr. Herridge: I can quite truthfully say that the two small groups at this end of the house are the only ones who have fully kept their promises to the veterans of this country. I listened with interest to the hon. member because I have been on veterans affairs committees over a period of twelve years—I would advise anyone who wants to get the history of this question to read some of the remarks of the hon. member and his colleagues in the house and in the veterans affairs committee—and I remember when other members of this house were trying to get amendments to the legislation in the direction in which these amendments go. It does make a great deal of difference what the circumstances are and on which side of the house you sit. One could easily understand, Mr. Speaker, in view of the situation as it exists today, that we in this group have a very virtuous feeling because we have never broken our word.

I am not going to deal with the sections that bring some benefit to the veterans and their dependents in this country, because I am going to be reasonably brief. I can deal with those when we are dealing with the bill in committee. But I do want to say a few words about several matters in which the Legion is interested. In the Legion brief which arrived in our mail boxes yesterday evening there is the suggestion of \$140 per month for married persons, and that is a good objective for us all. In so far as the ceilings are concerned, which is a matter in which I have been interested for quite a number of years, I am sorry that the government has not seen fit to accept the representations of its former colleagues in the house and in the