

been moved and seconded at this time. The question is therefore that this House do now adjourn.

**Mr. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the fact that today is the Clerk Assistant's birthday. We hope he will have many more such happy occasions.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

### VETERANS AFFAIRS—REQUIREMENT THAT WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCE RECIPIENTS APPLY FOR GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I was hesitating for a moment in the hope that we might have a speech from the Clerk Assistant on this happy occasion.

On Tuesday, February 16, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 3428—

**An hon. Member:** We are all leaving, Stanley.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** —I put the following question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Dubé):

In view of the anxiety expressed by many veterans 65 years of age or over who are receiving war veterans allowances because of a notice to the effect that they must apply for a guaranteed income supplement or be regarded as doing so, will the minister make a statement as to why this is being done and the authority for it?

In his reply the minister referred to the increases that are to take place in disability pensions and war veterans allowances in April. He also made reference to the relationship between these payments on the one hand and old age security and the guaranteed income supplement on the other. I then put to the minister the following supplementary question:

Will the minister check into the aspect of the notice which tells these veterans that they must so apply and that if they do not do so they will be regarded as having done so? That is the point on which we would like to have an explanation.

I thank the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs for his attendance tonight to deal with this question. I recognize that he has been here two or three nights for this very purpose, but storms and votes and other incidents have washed out the "late show". Tonight, however, we are here—and in view of the storm we might be here all night.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that when a veteran over 65 years of age is on the war veterans allowance it does not matter, in terms of the total dollars he will receive, whether or not he applies for and gets the guaranteed income supplement. It does not matter because of the

## Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

means test ceiling in the War Veterans Act. Thus, if a veteran is drawing old age security and war veterans allowance, the war veterans allowance will bring his total income up to the permissible ceiling. If he applies for and obtains the guaranteed income supplement on top of the old age security, the amount of his war veterans allowance will be reduced. But the total will be the same. We all recognize that and there is no argument about it.

It is also understood that if there are no hitches, the war veterans allowance rates will increase in April of this year. When these rates increase, so will the ceilings on total permissible income. The ceilings will become \$161 a month for the single war veterans allowance recipient, and \$271 a month for the married recipient. I have the figures in front of me, but it is not necessary to give them all tonight. The fact to which I alluded earlier stands, namely, that either a combination of old age security and war veterans allowance, or a combination of the three, old age security, guaranteed income supplement and war veterans allowance, will come out to the same total.

• (10:40 p.m.)

We are not arguing about the number of dollars that a veteran will receive, married or single, if he is 65 or over. But a great many of these veterans feel that it is unfair for them to be told that they must apply for a guaranteed income supplement. That is the word that has been given to them. They have been told that if they do not apply they will be regarded as having done so and their war veterans allowance will be cut back accordingly. It will be readily recognized why veterans do not like this.

Money received as war veterans allowance is not subject to income tax. Money received as old age security and guaranteed income supplement is subject to income tax. Veterans, therefore, between the ages of 65 and 70 who do not get the exemption level that they would get if they were over 70, could be subject to income tax if they were on the guaranteed income supplement in a way that would not be the case if they were on the war veterans allowance.

There is also some question about fringe benefits of one kind or another that go with being on the war veterans allowance. There is also some question of what happens if a veteran goes out of the country because a friend may invite him to go down south for the winter. The fact is that continuing to draw the guaranteed income supplement is more difficult than continuing to draw war veterans allowance. On top of all this, Mr. Speaker, there is something that I hope we in this House still respect, namely, the pride of the veteran—who likes to be treated first of all as a veteran. Therefore, I share in the objection that many veterans have been expressing. We have all been getting these letters as a result of the notice that the veterans have been sent, which has not told them that they must apply for the guaranteed income supplement but it is practically that. They have been told in this notice, "If you do not apply, you will be regarded as having done so."