

We would draw to your attention the contents of a letter to the Prime Minister that was published in the "Legionary", October 1953, which expresses our views in a concise form.

"Dear Mr. St. Laurent:

For some years we have been asking for a revision of the War Veterans Allowance Act which would raise the ceiling on permissible income and permit an increase in the basic allowance for those with no other means of support. To us the moral and sociological reasons in favour of these changes seem overwhelming and our members find it difficult to understand why our representations have not been accepted.

There is little that we can add to the briefs previously presented. We would merely like to reiterate that as the Act stands at present it tends to defeat its own objectives. If the allowance is intended to assist the aged and needy veteran, the low permissive ceiling prevents him from supplementing his allowance sufficiently to enjoy a reasonable standard of living. If it is intended as a subsistence allowance, it is far too small.

The taxation laws of Canada consider that an income of less than \$2,000 is too low for a married man to pay income tax. Yet war veterans allowance expects a married couple to live on \$1,200 a year.

The war veterans allowance regulations themselves recognize that the ceiling is too low, and under Section 4 and the regulations about casual earnings, permit it to be substantially exceeded. - Yet for those unable to avail themselves of these provisions no exceptions are permitted.

Section 4 and the provisions about casual earnings also recognize the desirability of self-help, but this recognition is not extended to those who by forethought and thrift have gained for themselves small pensions or retirement annuities. The great merit of our Old Age Security Act is that it recognizes the desirability of encouraging individual thrift and saving, but the War Veterans Allowance Act discourages it.

Our pension laws recognize that pensions for disabilities cannot be affected by the earnings of the individual, but the small pensioner who must also use war veterans' allowance finds his pension of little value because its amount is practically deducted from his allowance.

These and other anomalies would be largely eliminated if the ceiling on permissible income were substantially raised. The plight of the individual fully dependent on W.V.A. would need to be separately considered, at least until he reached the age of 70 when old age security provisions would help bring him up to an acceptable standard of living.

In view of the very real and pressing need of a great many of the men on W.V.A., may we respectfully ask that steps be taken immediately to rectify the present situation.

On behalf of the Canadian Legion.

Yours sincerely,

C. B. LUMSDEN,
Dominion President.

It is the earnest hope of the Canadian Legion that the present committee will realize the need and assume the responsibility of recommending immediate action in this matter.

Dependent Parents

Dependent parents did not benefit to any extent by the revision of pension rates in 1951. Previous to that date a widow, for example, received \$75 a month; a dependent widowed mother received \$75 a month. After the revision the widow received \$100—the dependent widowed mother still received \$75.