

The Address—Mr. Cruickshank

Mr. Shaw: He explained it so that anyone could understand it if he wanted to.

Mr. Cruickshank: He might have explained it so that anyone could understand it, provided he did not want the true facts. But I am not referring to that.

I now want to refer for a moment to the hon. member for Broadview. I have been on the veterans affairs committee since I came back here in 1940, and I want to admit frankly that I have not made a particularly good job of it. I have not done all that I should nor accomplished all that I should on behalf of the veteran. But through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this to the veterans and the members of every Canadian Legion; and may I say that I have a letter from nearly every branch in the Dominion of Canada. The opposition at no time forced me to take the stand I took on behalf of my fellow veterans; and that is a matter of record in *Hansard* and in the veterans affairs committee, and is something of which I am exceedingly proud. I rather resent being told that I and my friend the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Croll) were dictated to in any way, shape or form by anybody in the stand that we took.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, may I say that I regret the fact that the government have not as yet seen fit to do what I think they should have done, particularly in behalf of recipients of the war veterans allowance. But at least we have obtained the promise that at the next session of the house a committee will be set up to review those cases which must of necessity be interlocked with those under the new Old Age Security Act which has been brought into force at this session. I resent any injection by a gallant member with a distinguished war record and, I know, a generous nature—I refer to the hon. member for Broadview—of a remark to the effect that we were coerced or forced into the action we have taken. Rather, I would prefer to believe that the action of the government to date was taken largely on the advice of men of more mature judgment than some of those who criticize the most.

I believe that the government are making a mistake in the present session in not bringing the war veterans allowance up to the proper rate at which I believe it should be. I believe that this amount could be arrived at in twenty-four hours by a meeting of the previous committee, under the same chairman, and with the same members, if necessary. I believe we could arrive at a figure that we think should be allowed these recipients of war veterans allowance. I am pleased that the government has announced, through the minister, that legislation will be brought down this session raising the basic

rate of pension of disability pensioners. I want to make myself perfectly clear. I do not believe that the civil servants will be overpaid when they get the new increases that have been mentioned. I want to make that perfectly clear because, after all, there may be a few civil servants in my own riding. But if the government admits that in order to cope with the present cost of living the civil servants need the increase as announced, proclaimed, advertised, and I will not say boasted of, by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) two days ago, then these poor war veterans are entitled to an increase not next year, but this session, and it should be made retroactive immediately.

I want to say one more thing, Mr. Speaker, with reference to the province of British Columbia—and I am speaking only for my own riding because I was reprimanded once before for speaking for other ridings. But I have the definite authority to speak on behalf of my own riding. Not only can I speak for my own association, which embraces every local from one end of the riding to the other, but in this particular instance I have the confidence of the people of all parties in my riding. If we can find a surplus, which I am proud to say we have found, of half a billion dollars, we can find the money necessary not next year but this year to see that no veteran or dependent goes short, no matter how bountiful the present pension may be.

I should like to touch on one other thing, Mr. Speaker. I will have to revert to irrigation on the coast, but I am particularly interested in my own riding and I frankly admit it. I should like to refer to the matter of river bank erosion. It has been often said by an hon. member from my own province that we in British Columbia will, as we see fit, support the St. Lawrence waterway because we believe it to be for the benefit of Canada as a whole. Along with the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan (Mr. Coldwell), we are prepared to say that there should be no discussion about the irrigation of Saskatchewan. We are prepared to go along with the St. Lawrence waterways, remembering, as was pointed out by both the premier of Ontario, the leader of the opposition of the province, and by other leading statemen, that the St. Lawrence waterway development is not merely a ship canal but a power development. Let there be no mistake about it. The main reason the St. Lawrence waterway development is to be undertaken is not to build a ship canal but to build power lines. Mr. Saunders has openly said so; Mr. Frost has openly said so; Mr. Thomson has openly said so. Every other leader in that province has said so and we in British Columbia—and I speak only for the Fraser Valley—are