

*The Address—Mr. Gillis*

these matters to the attention of the committee, and to record them for the benefit of those who may be considering proposed amendments to the act. In this and other debates I have heard a lot about who should get the credit for this and who should get the credit for that. My philosophy has been that you can get anything you want, so long as you do not care who gets the credit for it. In regard to the increase in the basic pension announced the other day, I want to compliment the minister. It was perhaps more generous than some hon. members of the house expected. It certainly was needed, and it met fully the demands of the Legion. I do not think anyone in particular can claim credit for that. The minister was fortunate in being the person to announce it.

The same thing applies to the War Veterans Allowance Act. I have heard people say that this party or that was responsible for it. I can remember the time when there were none of these acts. I can remember the formation of the old Great War Veterans' Association, and then its absorption by the great British Empire Service League, and the setting up of the branches of the basic organization. I can remember the names of many individuals who participated in building that organization and developing the mechanics of both the Pension Act and the War Veterans Allowance Act. Looking back over the years many people stand out in my mind, but I know they are not looking for any credit. There were hundreds of people who built the machinery the Legion uses today. There were many surveys, and many people lost a lot of time and sleep laying the basis for this War Veterans Allowance Act. I have met some of those people in this house who have grown old now; some of them are in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Back in the early thirties I sat in to help draft the original of this War Veterans Allowance Act, and it arose out of a survey of unemployment in the provinces and the way it affected the ex-servicemen. It is because many of these individuals were not looking for credit that we have the legislation, and that the Legion is a strong organization today. I hope it always remains sane. It has played a good role so far, but I believe it is fortunate that in this house there is a large representation of veterans who, regardless of party, have policed that legislation. They will see that nothing happens to interfere with it.

In my opinion no particular party should get any credit. The need is there, and it is a right that this country owes to the ex-servicemen. Thousands of veterans have participated in building the organization, and many members of this house have contributed

a lot of time in order to bring about what we have. I am glad that at this session the government at last recognized that the veterans were entitled to the increase of 33½ per cent in basic pension. I do not want anyone to think for a moment that what I am saying about the amendments to the War Veterans Allowance Act is by way of recrimination or carping criticism, because when we decide we have reached finality in any legislation and stop bringing these matters to the attention of the government, there will be no further need of us. When we decide we have reached finality in any legislation and there is no need of us any more, we can set up one man and give him a book and say: "You go ahead and administer it." But our job, as I see it, is to pick out defects and make reasonable recommendations as to how they might be remedied.

The War Veterans Allowance Act is designed to take care of a certain type of veteran. I hold in my hand an advertisement which appeared in one of the papers that circulate in my riding, namely the *Sydney Post-Record*. It is a block advertisement of recent date and in big letters it reads:

Wanted for needy war veteran one kitchen stove and bed clothing. Phone number 8138, Canadian Legion Branch No. 128 and goods will be picked up.

It was largely the unemployability of certain types of veterans that gave rise to the act in the first place. I say no act is perfect, or the problem has not been solved so long as that type of advertisement appears in a local paper in any part of this country. Here is one veteran who is badly in need of some assistance, otherwise the veterans organization in that community would not be advertising for help and assistance for him. A person who is obliged to accept that type of help is in the unfortunate category of ex-service personnel. If you examine the record I think you will find that particular group are veterans who slugged out the whole war in a combat unit and were unfortunate enough not to get a wound. They went all through the war and suffered terrific physical handicaps. They came back without any physical wounds and became employed in heavy industry, or in some other type of work. As a result of the gradual wearing down of their nervous systems and their bodies generally they crack up four or five or ten years after the war is over. They appear before a doctor, but they have no disability as such that entitles them to a pension, so they receive war veterans allowance. If they are single men the amount they can get is very small. They have to eke out an existence.