

a little more authority than I could have a year ago. I think I can say that each one of the officials and clerks in the department considers himself to be a defender of the veteran. So far as I know, each of these individuals is himself a veteran and is interested in the welfare of the veteran. I believe they will bend backwards to make sure that the veteran receives everything to which he is entitled or needs in order to carry out as useful a life as possible.

I have been inspired by the attitude generally that exists throughout the department. Since I last met with you I have had an opportunity to visit every one of the district offices throughout the country, and I think I have visited all but one hospital. I am satisfied the attitude of these people is such that they will do everything in their power to make sure that the rights of the veterans are protected and that everything which can be done for the veteran is being done.

You will appreciate there are very, very difficult cases and we all are aware of those because we receive the communications first whenever anything is unsatisfactory from the veterans' side. However, even in those cases there is the opportunity to come back two or three different times. I think you will know that in each case a very thorough investigation is carried out.

I should take this occasion to do more directly what I am doing rather obliquely; that is, to pay tribute to the staff, and I mean all of the staff, of this department and the Pension Commission for the manner in which they are carrying out their work.

Mr. HERRIDGE: Mr. Teillet, I would like to support you in that and say that this is one department of government where an ombudsman is not indicated.

Mr. FANE: Strange as it may seem, Mr. Chairman, my friend from Kootenay West here and I are in whole hearted agreement on that. I have found the Department of Veterans Affairs is very, very good.

Mr. McINTOSH: I hope you realize, Mr. Teillet, there is a conflict of opinion here, too.

Mr. TEILLET: I suppose this underlines the very humanity of the department.

Mr. PATTERSON: Perhaps this is because I am not a veteran, but I would not concur altogether in what has been said with reference to the various decisions which have been handed down.

I think possibly there is too strict adherence to some of the regulations which are laid down. Perhaps it is the regulations which have to be changed.

Mr. TEILLET: I do not think the Auditor General really would agree with you. If you look at this report every year, I believe you will see that we get our knuckles rapped. I do consider at times that the regulations are stretched to the point where it bothers me. However, so long as I feel I can stand up in the House of Commons and say this was done on humanitarian grounds, I do not feel I will be hit too hard for it. I certainly am not going to interfere. I think the truth of the matter, on examination, is that every advantage is taken of the regulations in order to give the veteran as much of a break as possible. I think that would be true right throughout the department.

Mr. FLEMING (*Okanagan-Revelstoke*): Would the minister tell us what are his intentions with regard to the recommendations of this committee in its last report?

Mr. TEILLET: As I said in my opening remarks, I appreciate the recommendations of the committee and while preparing legislative amendments and adjustments of what I will call generally the veterans charter, to use an overall expression, these recommendations have been most helpful. I have a feeling that when the report comes out in the House of Commons there will be general