

War Veterans' Allowance Act

widows whose husbands had not established their claim prior to death being discriminated against. I think he will find that such widows whose husbands did not claim the veterans allowance prior to death and who would otherwise qualify, that is to say by reason of age or their husband's service, are eligible for the allowance. The act says that is so and I am sure he will find it does operate in that way.

An hon. Member: What constitutes eligibility?

Mr. Dinsdale: As long as the widow has reached the age of 55 and her husband was eligible. In other words eligibility flows from the service given.

That is the only comment I want to make with reference to the ceiling. These things are all subject to discussion from time to time, particularly under inflationary conditions and no doubt the discussion will be of a continuing nature.

The observation has been made that there should be some provision whereby the veteran who reaches the age of 70 could receive both his veterans allowance and his old age security. Now that would push the ceilings up to the level of \$1,500 per annum for a single veteran and \$2,760 for a married veteran.

There is one thing to remember, of which I think most hon. members are aware, and that is the relationship between the war veterans allowance and the disability pension. This relationship must always be kept in mind. It was of course never intended that the recipient of a war veterans allowance payment should be in a superior position to the recipient of a disability pension. At the present time the single ceiling of \$1,080 represents 50 per cent of the total disability pension and the married ceiling of \$1,740 represents 73 per cent of the total disability pension for a married veteran. It is today considered that this ratio is an appropriate maximum; otherwise a veteran with a 20 per cent disability pension would, upon reaching the age of 60, receive the equivalent of an 80 or 90 per cent pension.

Everyone will agree that disability pensions are paid in respect of the highest possible kind of service and that a significant margin should be maintained between this type of compensation and the payment of allowances which are more in the nature of social legislation.

Here again discussion and debate can be carried on but at the point at which this actual situation stands at the moment there must be some suitable relationship maintained between these two categories, as the

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

disability pension and the war veterans allowance which is popularly known as the burnt-out pension.

Now I have not dealt in detail with all the matters raised by hon. members. I do not think some of these matters come within the purview of the bill before us, but if any member feels that this topic has not been adequately covered in my review I am quite sure the minister will be only too happy to discuss these matters further when we come to the committee stage. We all agree that this is a good beginning and one which has been handled expeditiously. With a large part of the cabinet made up of hon. members who are themselves veterans we can rest assured that under this new administration the welfare of our Canadian veterans will be kept uppermost in their minds. I think if we can now proceed to a further consideration of this legislation and the other legislation which is to follow, so as to clear the way for its expeditious consideration before Remembrance day on November 11 next, there could be no better tribute that we could pay to those whom we honour in this special way.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Courtemanche in the chair.

On clause 1—*Widows of allied veterans.*

Mr. Herridge: I rise at this time, Mr. Chairman, to say how pleased I am to see that this clause is in the bill. I remember distinctly on two or three occasions in the past I was associated with the minister in what was later termed in the House of Commons as a group of nice old ladies whose representations should receive favourable consideration and I am very glad he has given that consideration.

Mr. Fraser: May I ask a question? Will new application forms be printed to cover this bill, that is, on account of the section included concerning service in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Brooks: I understand the hon. member wishes to know if an application form will be sent to those who wish to apply for the allowance in respect of service in the United Kingdom. Yes, application forms will be sent to any one on request.

I also wish to say how pleased I was to hear the hon. member for Kootenay West speak about the group of ladies who come to see us every year. I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that they will be very happy tonight to know that by the next time they come their request will have been granted. I am sure they are