

provide for an increase in veterans allowances and disability pensions.

If honourable senators have looked at Supplementary Estimates (C) they will have noticed that the estimates also provide for the schedules to the act being repealed and new ones inserted. They also provide for various other sections of the Pension Act being amended, which have to do with clothing allowance, disability allowance and things of that nature.

Honourable senators, this may or may not be a new procedure. I am not an expert and do not pretend to know, but I understand that the procedure in the past has usually been that when the Pension Act or War Veterans' Allowance Act is to be amended, a bill for that purpose is brought before the House of Commons. It then receives second reading in the other place and is referred to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. There are many senators here who, during their days in that "happy" other place, served on that committee. That is one committee where there was perfect harmony, and it always turned out the best possible job in favour of the veteran.

It seems to me unfortunate that on this occasion the Government did not follow that well defined practice, because various veterans' organizations—principally the Legion and others of the same type—usually wish to appear before that committee and make representations. Those who have served on that committee in the past will readily recall the excellent representations and presentations made by the Legion on various occasions.

I am not complaining seriously about the way this is being handled, but when the Leader of the Government rises at the end of the debate perhaps he could tell me if there is some special reason for making these amendments in this rather unusual way.

These allowances under the War Veterans' Allowance Act and the Pension Act are being increased by approximately 10 per cent. In their brief, the Legion asked for an increase of 33½ per cent, or that the pension rates be increased in order to bring such rates into line with the salaries of civil servants as they existed following World War I. To do that would mean increasing the basic rate to approximately \$3,500 a year.

I am somewhat curious to know just what yardstick the Government used when they made the decision to increase the allowances and the disability pensions by 10 per cent. During the last 12 or 18 months senators and members of Parliament have had a "slight" increase in pay. Judges, members of the armed forces and very large numbers of civil servants in various categories have all received increases in varying degrees. For that reason I am curious as to why 10 per cent was decided on rather than 20 per cent.

Pension rates are supposed to be based on the income of the average worker in the common labour market. That has been an accepted principle over a long period of years. It has always appeared to me most unfortunate that veterans who have rendered the highest possible service to their country should be placed on the lowest possible income level so far as consideration of their pension rates and allowances is concerned. But in accepting the income of the average worker in the common labour market as a standard, we find that payments for 100 per cent disability are still below the average wage paid in the common labour market.

The Legion has presented a brief to the cabinet each year, generally on November 11. In the brief presented this year, they make this comment at page 4:

Since pension rates are supposed—

And I emphasize the words "are supposed"—

to be based on the income of the average worker in the common labour market, these figures and those in Appendix "A" clearly demonstrate that pension rates are vastly inferior to those to which they are supposed to relate and to which they did, in fact, relate in 1920.

And in Appendix "A" attached to their brief they show that a 100 per cent disability in 1920 for a single veteran was \$900, while in 1964 it is \$2,160. The disability rate for a married veteran in 1920 was \$1,200, and in 1964 it is \$2,880. Then they show that in the civil service a customs guard who received \$1,260 in 1920, in 1964 received \$3,740. They also cite the wages of cleaners and helpers who in 1920 received \$1,200 and in 1964 receive \$3,500.

Disability pensions are paid on the basis of rank, and when you compare the old schedule of pensions set out in the amendment of 1960 with those in the schedule of Supplementary Estimates (C), you will find under the old rate that a brigadier's disability pension amounted to \$540 a year more than that of a private soldier or those of the rank of colonel and below. Under the new schedule there is a difference of \$300. Furthermore, there was a difference of \$504 in the pension that a brigadier's widow received and that of a widow of a colonel and all ranks below. Under the new schedule the difference is \$336. One wonders why there is this difference.

If you look at page 9 of the Supplementary Estimates (C) you see the most peculiar assessment of all, because there it shows that the widow or the dependent parent of a veteran up to the rank of lieutenant-colonel can receive up to \$1,428 a year pension,