

Now in this connection, Mr. Chairman, it is not necessary for me to make extended remarks we know that all veterans organizations which have appeared before this committee have asked that the war veterans allowance be considered. There are two main points which they have emphasized: one was the increase in the basic allowance; the second was the raising of the ceiling on permissive income. This matter has been in abeyance since 1952. In 1952 we felt that the basic rate then was too low and we felt that the ceiling should be increased. Here it is 1954 and we have had another veterans affairs committee and this matter has not been dealt with. It has caused great disappointment to the members here; it has caused great disappointment to the veterans all across Canada; and it has caused great disappointment to everyone who is in sympathy with the veterans. Now, if this matter is not dealt with at this session of parliament we do not know that there will be a meeting of the veterans affairs committee next year or the year after. The legion in their brief emphasized very strongly that it was not in the future that they wanted this matter dealt with, but that it was at the present time. In their brief on page 6 they say:

It is the earnest hope of the Canadian Legion that the present committee will realize the need and assume the responsibility of recommending immediate action in this matter.

They were speaking of the war veterans allowance.

Now, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen, I feel that this committee is not doing justice to these war veterans' allowance recipients unless this matter is dealt with here in this committee as set up at this time. We can recommend to the House that our terms of reference be broadened to include the war veterans' allowance, and even though it is near the end of the session there is no reason why a bill cannot be brought down at this session amending the War Veterans Act in these two particulars. We can deal with it, and can deal with it in a few hours if it comes before us. As I said before, time is the great factor. The war veterans allowance recipients are old men. I listened here the other day to Brigadier Melville when he was giving his evidence and I was amazed at the number of widows who are applying for pension, indicating that the men of the first war—and you have only to read the Legionnaire each month to see name after name of men who are passing away at the age of 62 or 63, and one year, two years, or three years are going to make a great difference as far as these men are concerned. I say, Mr. Chairman, we cannot pass this matter up by simply making a pious reference to it in our report. It is our duty here as members of this committee to ask the House of Commons to enlarge our terms of reference and ask them to present to us a bill which will relieve the situation.

When it was asked that the Veterans Affairs committee be set up, what was in the minds of every member? What is in the minds of the Canadian Legion? What is in the minds of all those who are concerned with veterans across Canada? They felt that the big problem which we as a committee would have to deal with would be the war veterans allowance. It was on the lips of everyone, "Now we will have an opportunity to deal with the war veterans allowance and deal with it effectively, as it should be". I say, Mr. Chairman, that I am very certain that this motion of mine is in order, and I hope that this committee will see its way clear to pass it. As I said before, we have time yet to correct what I consider a very great injustice to the war veterans allowance recipients in this country.

Mr. HERRIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to extend wholehearted support to Mr. Brooks's motion.

The CHAIRMAN: Just before we debate the motion, Mr. Herridge, have you the terms of reference of the 1951 committee that you referred to there, Mr. Brooks?