

served in a theatre of actual war, who because of a combination of conditions and circumstances is not likely again to become self-supporting, and it will exclude only those veterans who are physically fit to maintain themselves as and when work is available to them.

The veterans' assistance commission, whose report was recently tabled, found there were approximately 15,000 veterans unemployed throughout the dominion who had service in a theatre of actual war and were unprovided for by pensions or allowances. They classified these veterans into three groups, "fit," "partially fit" and "unfit." Over 10,000 of these veterans were classified by the commission as being "fit" and 5,171 were classed as "partially fit" and "unfit." It is this group of just over 5,000 veterans that the amendment contemplates providing for, subject of course to investigation and approval by the board. The anticipated annual cost will be about \$2,000,000.

Summarizing the situation, therefore, it may be said originally the act provided for the veteran of sixty and the totally incapacitated veteran. Later it was broadened enabling the board to give special consideration to the veteran over fifty-five. Now it is proposed to amend the act further to the end that the board administering this legislation is empowered to grant the allowance to any veteran, regardless of his years, who in its opinion, because of economic conditions and handicaps combined with disabilities, is unlikely again to become self-supporting.

It may be said that in passing this legislation we shall be fulfilling to the utmost the requests of the returned soldiers themselves as expressed through the dominion convention of the Canadian legion held in Fort William early in February when a resolution was passed on the subject of cash bonus to veterans of the Great war. The resolution reads in part:

That this convention endorse the resolution passed by the dominion executive council to the effect that it is unalterably opposed to the principle of any bonus for service in the great war, conceiving it to be the responsibility of the government of Canada to adequately provide only for those disabled as a result of war service and dependents and dependents of the fallen and to ensure adequate assistance for those who saw service in a theatre of actual war and who are now by reason of economic conditions combined with their disability, tangible and intangible, resulting from war service, unable through no fault of their own to secure employment.

With respect to this resolution I submit that provision has already been made through pension legislation to "care for those dis-

abled as a result of their service and dependents and the dependents of the fallen," and I further submit that this amendment is intended for and will take care of those who "by reason of economic conditions combined with their disabilities, tangible and intangible, are unable to secure employment."

The veterans' assistance commission, with regard to the War Veterans' Allowance Act recommended as follows:

That the act be amended by removal of age fifty-five years where it refers to the granting of an allowance because of disability, pre-aging and general unfitness, and that it be amended further so as to permit a more liberal interpretation of legislation covering the granting of the allowance at any age to a veteran who saw service in a theatre of actual war and who because of his unfit condition or other handicaps is unable to maintain himself.

This recommendation is being fully implemented by this amendment, and moreover, certain classes of veterans with respect to whom recommendations were made by the commission involving lesser allowances will now, by this amendment, be provided for under the War Veterans' Allowance Act which provides a more generous scale of assistance.

I have no hesitation in stating that with this amendment the War Veterans' Allowance Act of Canada will be broader in its scope and more generous in its terms than similar legislation in any other country.

It is also provided, in accordance with the undertaking given last year that if it was feasible to do so it would be done, that South African veterans shall be brought within the provisions of the War Veterans' Allowance Act. While it was very difficult to get at the exact figures, it is estimated that this will cost approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 per annum.

It is also provided that, in view of the increased amount of work placed on the shoulders of the members of the board, the board be enlarged from three to five members.

Provision is also made for the exemption of the grants which accompany certain decorations such as the Victoria cross and the distinguished conduct medal. These grants, as hon. members know, amount in the case of the Victoria cross to approximately \$50 per annum, and a somewhat lesser amount accompanies the distinguished conduct medal. There was no legislation providing for an exemption in respect of these amounts, and it is now provided that there shall be.

Mr. H. C. GREEN (Vancouver South): I have no wish at this stage to start a debate on this resolution, particularly since the government, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus, has apparently now seen a great light