

## War Veterans' Allowance Act

## OIL

REPORTED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PRIME  
MINISTER AND PREMIER OF ALBERTA

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. E. G. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Prime Minister a question. I wonder whether he would now be prepared to comment on the recent meeting between himself and Premier Manning of Alberta?

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have not yet had the pleasure of reading what the *Toronto Star* had to say regarding the meeting. It was simply a meeting convened for the purpose of hearing the general situation resulting from the regulations imposed by the United States on oil importations into that country, and also the effect of the re-opening of the Suez canal on the demand for Alberta oil in those portions of the United States comprised within what I believe is called district No. 5, the California district.

In the course of the meeting the premier of Alberta placed before me the situation respecting the export of oil from Alberta, and I must say it was a very co-operative meeting, in which views were exchanged very fully. I hope to be hearing from the premier of Alberta further information regarding the problem, and after that has been received, what representations should be made to the United States will be considered.

## WAR VETERANS' ALLOWANCE ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING ALLOWANCES,  
INCOME, COVERAGE, ETC.

**Hon. A. J. Brooks (Minister of Veterans Affairs)** moved the second reading of Bill No. 28, to amend the War Veterans' Allowance Act.

He said: As I indicated the other day when the house was in committee on the resolution, the bill which hon. members now have in their possession deals with seven sections of the War Veterans' Allowance Act, 1952, and in addition proposes amendments to the two schedules which set forth the rate of allowance and the maximum permissive income for several groups of recipients. Associated with the amendments to the schedules is an amendment to the rate set forth in section 5 of the act.

Before I go into the details of the amendments I think it would be appropriate to review, for the benefit of the new members of the house, the background of the War Veterans' Allowance Act. This measure was first enacted in 1930. At the outset it applied only to veterans who had service in a theatre of actual war in world war I or

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

were in receipt of a pension under the Pension Act, who had a low income or none at all, and who were either 60 years of age or permanently unemployable. The allowance must not be confused with a pension under the Pension Act. A pension is awarded for a disability connected with service, whereas war veterans allowance may be paid where there is no disability at all or where the disability causing permanent unemployability is not service connected. It may, and often does, happen that a war veterans allowance recipient is also receiving a small disability pension.

A pension under the Pension Act, as hon. members know, is paid to rich and poor alike. An allowance under the War Veterans' Allowance Act is subject to a means test because of the ceiling on permissible income. The maximum single rate was originally \$240 and the married rate was \$480; that was in 1930. The income ceilings were \$365 a year for single persons and \$730 for those qualified as married. Rates and allowances have been increased from time to time and are now, single, \$720 a year, ceiling \$960; the married rate is \$1,440 a year and the ceiling \$1,620 a year. In 1938 the benefits of the War Veterans' Allowance Act were extended to veterans of the South African war; in 1943, to widows whose eligibility flowed from the eligibility of their late husbands, and in 1944 to veterans of World War II and their widows. Other amendments were enacted in 1946, 1948, 1950, 1952 and 1955. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the amendments to the schedules of rates and income ceilings are felt by hon. members, and by the veteran body at large, to be of paramount importance.

As I mentioned briefly during the discussion on the resolution preceding this bill, certain changes were made in the schedules effective July 1 of this year by means of a vote in the supplementary estimates. At that time the married rate of allowance was increased from \$108 to \$120 per month, but no change was made in the single rate which remained at \$60 per month. The government feels not only that this action discriminated against the single recipient, but also that the monthly rate of \$60 is out of line with present day costs. It is now proposed to raise the single rate of \$60 to \$70, thus restoring the approximate percentage balance between the single and married rates. With respect to income ceilings, it is desirable to maintain sufficient difference between them and the allowance rate to enable a war veterans allowance recipient to benefit from some of the other income which he may