

I do not think it would be fair to future veterans affairs committees for us to do all the work and leave them without anything to do. We feel that we should leave a little something for some future committee to do.

The argument has been advanced that because the men and women who served in Britain in World War II are entitled to the war veterans allowance, therefore those who served in Britain in World War I should be equally entitled.

Those of us who were in Britain in World War I and in World II have got to admit that there is no earthly comparison between the conditions in World War I and those in World War II.

We have always felt, in presenting a brief from the national council, that the strength of our case has always been that we have never put ourselves behind something which we did not feel we could push to the limit and justify.

The day may come, however, when we or our successors may feel that we can justify extending the war veterans allowance to those who served in Britain only in World I, but we do not feel that we can do it now. We have yet to make a first recommendation to this committee or to the government that we did not feel that we could justify to the limit. I do want to make this one observation, that we are very happy in the National Council about the approach taken by the War Veterans Allowance Board and the department and I think it is due the minister to say particularly since the Hon. Mr. Lapointe took over the office of the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Those words of appreciation extend to all the heads and officers of the department. We have found them cooperative and interested and—this I believe is attributable to the minister—they have held in many instances the same views which we do in the questions we have to approach. There is one observation I wish to make about that situation. Looking at the directives which the War Veterans Allowance Board issue from time to time I have to admit frankly that they appear to be quite generous in dealing with casual earnings; their interpretation of the directives as to what are casual earnings appear to be quite generous. The only observation we wish to make further than that is we would like to be able to feel that that attitude will not change and that there will be no restriction in the generosity of those directives following any action which the House may take in amending the bill and increasing the allowances. Our main point here today on the question of allowable income is toward and on behalf of those who do not have available, because of disability or lack of opportunity, the access to these various casual earnings which on the face of the matter appear to be quite generous, but it does not matter how generous one is if you cannot gain access to his generosity.

I feel I have taken sufficient time. If there is anything which I have overlooked I am sure my colleagues will prod me and I will be glad to answer, or call on my associates to answer, any questions which you wish to ask. There are some of my colleagues who wish to make verbal representations on their own behalf. Would it be preferable to have them make their presentations now?

The CHAIRMAN: I think it would be preferable to have them speak first.

The WITNESS: I would call on Mr. Butler.

Mr. GOODE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I may ask Mr. Wickens how many members are in these combined six or seven organizations?

The WITNESS: We have approximately 200,000 in ours. I will have to ask the others to speak for theirs.

War amputations, roughly 5,500; war blinded, 330; Canadian Corps Association 10,000; war pensioners, approximately 900; paraplegic, approximately 250.

The CHAIRMAN: You wish to call on Mr. Butler?