

Supply—Veterans Affairs

545 to attempt, in so far as I can, to reply to some of the questions that were asked then, and to which I requested an opportunity to give further study. I do not want to be accused of holding up my own estimates, but I should like to answer those questions in recognition of the co-operative manner in which members from all sides of the house assisted in getting a large number of items through two weeks ago.

The hon. member for Wentworth raised the question of paying transportation of veterans who are admitted under class 5 (a) of our treatment regulations. I understood him to say that if a veteran were admitted to an outside hospital in an emergency, and later transferred to one of our own hospitals, he was required to pay his own transportation. I should like to correct this impression. If, because of requiring emergent treatment, he is admitted to an outside hospital and we accept him for treatment under class 5 (a), we not only pay his bill at the outside hospital, but we also provide transportation if we find it necessary to bring him to one of our own institutions. Whilst the regulations in the past may not have been very clear in this regard, recently instructions have been issued clarifying the whole situation.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra and many other members discussed the training of merchant seamen. The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra is reported in *Hansard* as having said that only 47 out of 518 applicants had been accepted for vocational training. As of September 30, 1949, the actual facts are that out of 770 applications received 118 were rejected because of being over the age provided, 100 were withdrawn, 317 were approved, and of the remaining 235, 195 were declined on the ground that they were not eligible through not having left the sea, the remaining 40 being in process for one reason and another.

One other perhaps minor matter was that the hon. member for Vancouver East stated to the house that he had been informed that investigations under the War Veterans Allowance Act were performed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I find that this is only in extremely isolated areas where it would be impracticable and unwarrantable to undergo the expense of sending in a departmental official, such as the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and similar regions. I might add, I am sure hon. members would agree with me that if we happened to be in such territory we could think of no more acceptable bearer of veterans' benefits than a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In reply to the question asked by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Quelch) with regard

[Mr. Gregg.]

to the number of applications for payment under the war veterans allowance assistance fund, I will give the following information. Total applications received to October 7, 1949, 3,155; the total applications declined, 740. The total number of applications approved to date amounts to 2,415. The financial commitment on the part of the department for those approved applications is \$160,747. It will be noted that covers approximately a six-months period and, I should add, the best six months of the year. The six worst months in this connection are still to come.

The hon. member for Melfort (Mr. Wright) raised a question of beneficiaries under the Veterans Insurance Act. As I explained the other day, it was the intention of this act to provide protection for a veteran and his immediate relatives. I now state, however, that the department has currently under consideration a request to amend the regulations which would extend the list of contingent beneficiaries to include uncles, aunts and related family.

In the discussion of liquid assets of war veterans allowance recipients, the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Pearkes) made reference to a specific problem. The problem was that if a veteran in receipt of war veterans allowance owns a house and sells that house, his liquid assets are increased and may be in excess of that set by the regulations of the war veterans allowance board. Of course, that is the case.

The hon. member requested that the veteran be allowed to retain the proceeds from the sale of his house, without jeopardizing his war veterans allowance, for a certain period provided he intends to reinvest in another house. I believe that interprets the hon. member's suggestion. On investigation, I find that that is the principle followed by the board in dealing with such cases. No account is taken by the board of such liquid assets for a period of one or two years, according to the circumstances. In other words, the veteran is permitted to retain the proceeds from the sale of his house for a certain period, for the purpose of buying another house, without being penalized as far as his war veterans allowance is concerned.

The hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge) made some suggestions with regard to settlement of veterans on provincial lands, particularly as that problem is related to British Columbia. I am glad to inform the hon. member that working arrangements between the provincial authorities and the Veterans Land Act have been developed to a marked degree. I would suggest that the member contact the director of the Veterans Land Act, who will be only too glad to go into this whole problem with him and explain