

The Address—Mr. Green

recipients of war veterans allowance. In 1949 provision was made for an assistance fund, which has been called the war veterans allowance assistance fund, under which the recipient of a full war veterans allowance can get additional help up to a total of \$10 a month for a single man and \$15 a month for a married man.

That was not an automatic additional payment. The help was given in the shape of perhaps money to buy a suit or money to buy blankets. It was in effect a handout, not a direct increase in the amount of the war veterans allowance. There still is a fund of that type. It carries with it the humiliation of a second means test, because each time a veteran applies for this help he must prove that he is in need, and he must apply year after year. There is no such thing as applying one year and getting the payment for two or three of the following years. The money itself, from which these payments are made, is contained in an annual vote in the estimates. There is no statutory foundation; it is simply contained in an annual vote. But the fund has had one very good effect. It has proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that an increase is needed in the amount of the war veterans allowance. The very fact that there has to be this assistance fund clearly proves that there should be an increase in the allowance itself. Mind you, only a small percentage of the recipients of war veterans allowance are able to qualify for this extra assistance.

Now here we are in November, 1951, the day after Remembrance day. The cost of living has gone up to 190·4, as compared with the years from 1935 to 1939. The cost of food and the cost of clothing have gone a great deal higher than that figure. I think the situation was very neatly put in an editorial in *The Legionary*, which is the magazine of the Canadian Legion, in the edition of May, 1951. There we find these words:

To all the burnt-out men on war veterans allowance the "cost of living" actually means the cost of keeping alive.

How true those words are. Then the editorial goes on:

Whereas rising living costs to the majority of Canadians have meant skimping a bit and doing without certain luxuries, to many disability pensioners and all—

And I mark that word "all". I continue:—and all war veterans allowance recipients the result has been a deplorable lowering in their already low living standards.

The men and women in these two categories are not concerned with the jump in automobile prices, or the higher cost of electric washing machines. They were already leading a marginal existence before the price increases and were never able to

afford such luxuries. What they are vitally and desperately concerned about now is the price of bread and butter and milk and wheat, of everyday clothes and other essentials that are needed to exist. To them, the cost of living increase does not mean the official, over-all 79·7 per cent,—

And incidentally, since that editorial was written it has gone up from 179·7 to 190·4. The editorial continues:

—but the considerably more than 100 per cent rise in basic food and commodity prices.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and to hon. members that for a very existence these men need at least \$50 a month. For the veteran and his wife the amount should be at least \$100 a month, \$50 per person. Let us not try to hedge on that question. I do not believe there is an hon. member who dare deny the statement that that amount is needed. It is recognized in some of the provinces. For example, it has been recognized for some years now in British Columbia and in Alberta, because an additional sum of \$10 has been paid to the old age pensioners in order that they may get \$50 a month, rather than \$40 which was the official figure, the payment of which was shared by the dominion and the provinces. Even with the new old age pension, which is to commence at the first of next year the province of British Columbia is adding \$10 to the amount received by the senior citizens who are in need, and is doing the same thing for those men and women from 65 to 69. Those who need that help will get an additional \$10 from British Columbia.

Certainly, the war veterans allowance should be as high as the old age pension. I pointed out a few minutes ago that it is in effect an old age pension for veterans, payable ten years earlier because of their front-line service. I hold in my hand a letter from a veteran which I think sums up the picture very neatly. You know, usually we get the real facts in letters from men and women out in the ridings, the men and women who are doing the suffering. They have a way of painting the picture so that there can be no difficulty seeing what it is. Here is what this veteran says who wrote to me on the 2nd of this month:

As you know the old age pension is down to 65 with a means test and a possibility of \$50 a month.

Of course that has since been made so by the British Columbia legislature. I continue:

Many of us veterans here are not getting that much and some of us are at the 65 mark and are thinking of making application for old age pension but the medical attention and hospital are good here.