

The Address—Mr. Green

This was an instance when a Canadian naval vessel started out and was then recalled. The United States coastguard vessel came all the way from Astoria, Oregon, and without hesitation. It came up to help this Canadian ship and that United States coastguard vessel was fourteen hours further away from the scene of the accident than the Canadian vessel.

There is no reason at all for that sort of thing. The other afternoon the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) was saying that Canada is a nation—and I agree that she is. I do not agree with everything else he said—because certainly he spoke a good deal of “eyewash,” if he will pardon my saying so. Certainly there is no reason why this nation of Canada should not have a coastguard service on the west and east coasts, and I hope there will be no further delay in getting it.

In British Columbia we are also particularly interested in two broad groups of subjects, the first being that of veterans affairs and the second general welfare measures. We have a larger percentage of veterans than any other province in Canada. They have come there in large numbers since the war and, as hon. members are aware, we had very heavy enlistments. Furthermore the people of our province have always been social-security minded, taking great interest in welfare measures.

With regard to veterans affairs, may I suggest once more to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Gregg) that there should be a standing committee of the house on veterans' problems. We have pressed for that time and again, but without result. Problems of the veterans, in my experience, have been adequately dealt with only when a special committee on veterans affairs has been set up. I say there should be a standing committee.

Last spring an increase in the war veterans allowance was provided, not by way of an amendment to the act but by a vote. That means that such votes will have to be passed each year. It does not provide for a definite increase. The way it is working out is that if a veteran can pass a second means test he can perhaps get help by way of getting money for a new suit of clothes, or something of that kind. I believe the war veterans allowance should be increased as a matter of right to \$50 for the single man, without a second means test at all, and that there should be a corresponding increase for the married man. I suggest also that imperial veterans, some of whom have been in Canada now for nearly thirty years, should be made eligible for the war veterans allowance. I say the men of the merchant navy should be treated as though they had served in the fighting forces. They

are not now treated in that way. For example, while they have been given certain vocational training benefits and given those only after the utmost pressure had been exerted in the House of Commons they have been refused vocational training as from the end of June this year. They could not qualify unless they were under thirty years of age at the time of application. Those restrictions should be removed. They should be made eligible for university benefits, and should have a broader eligibility for pensions. I have known many sad cases where men of the merchant navy have incurred different disabilities, particularly by way of disease, and yet it has been impossible for them to get pension. They receive no consideration in connection with veterans housing projects, and they are not eligible for the civil service preference. All these defects should be remedied, and remedied quickly; and I am afraid it can be done only if a committee on veterans affairs is set up.

Then, with respect to general welfare measures, we in British Columbia believe—at least during the election campaign every candidate believed it, no matter to which party he or she belonged; and I must assume they meant what they said and published—that there should be a general plan of social security on a contributory basis. I do not believe our welfare troubles in Canada will ever be solved until we have a general contributory pension plan under which people will contribute as they work, and then will receive adequate benefits as of right without having to go through any means tests. That is the Canadian way of settling this problem of social security. I am disappointed to see nothing on that subject in the speech from the throne. It is perhaps the most important question which could be dealt with by parliament at this time—and yet we see no word of it in the speech from the throne.

Then, a very serious defect requires remedy in connection with old age pensions. At the spring session of the House of Commons an increase of \$10 a month was granted. The rate was raised by \$10. That, too, was done only after great pressure. However, while the rate was raised by \$10 the ceiling was not lifted, so that if a person is earning a small income over and above the amount of pension, he receives no benefit whatever through the increase of \$10 because the ceiling on general income was not raised. I am amazed that that is not being remedied at this session. I have here articles from two of the Vancouver papers, including the Vancouver *Sun*, which is a strong supporter of the government, pointing out this injustice and appealing to parliament to raise the ceiling at this session. I hope the government will change