

War Veterans' Allowance Act

type since it was such as to satisfy a great many of the needs of our veterans. I am not prepared to claim that it was perfect. No legislation can be that. I will even go so far as to say that there is still a great deal to be done to improve the lot of our veterans. But on the other hand we have every right to expect that the minister and his parliamentary assistant will very shortly see to it that a good many of their past suggestions are now to be put into effect.

I was happy to hear the member from Rosthern (Mr. Tucker) put before the house the views expressed by the Legion, both orally and in writing.

They show that while veterans accept the proposed legislation and the promises made by this government, they saw fit to express their appreciation and gratitude to the former government. The majority of our people will not be lulled nor blinded by details, and we know that they will not forget all that was done in the past with regard to this legislation. However, there is always room for improvement.

We should not overlook the fact that, if the government is now in a position to increase the allowances, it is because of the former government's unremitting endeavours, over the years, to improve this act and provide a maximum of security for our veterans.

In my opinion, it must not be forgotten that this legislation rests on foundations of which we Liberals have reason to be proud.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would call the attention of the house to the fact that one of the most controversial questions in the past has been that of the setting up of a standing committee of veterans affairs and that the hon. minister himself was among the most ardent supporters of that proposition. Well, Mr. Speaker, you cannot have it both ways. What was good before June 10 remains so and I contend that the hon. minister, to be consistent, should at the very first opportunity set up that standing committee so that all who are interested in discussing veterans problems may do so. I am sure that if we had had the opportunity to hear the representatives of veterans organizations, this bill would certainly be much better. I therefore hope that in the near future the hon. minister will set up that standing committee on veterans affairs.

(Text):

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, the amendment to the War Veterans' Allowance Act will I am sure be

well received by all veterans organizations, all veterans and the public generally. I do not wish to delay second reading of the bill by going into the provisions or by any lengthy discussion. The purpose of the bill was concisely and clearly stated by the minister when speaking on the motion for second reading. I felt rather sorry that all members were not seated in the house at the time because I know that all members are interested in this subject. I know the minister's words will be read in *Hansard* fully and completely by hon. members.

I should like to say something in passing about the Canadian Legion. I realize that there are other veterans organizations representing the interests of veterans, but since its beginning the Legion has represented to the government of the day the feelings of veterans generally as to what legislation was required in order to deal fairly with everybody. Injustices and difficulties do come up from time to time, and as long as the department and the government receive the Legion briefs I am sure the Legion will continue to present them.

A brief was presented in November, 1956, and I believe this bill brings into effect many of the recommendations then made. As one hon. member has just stated, a brief was also received in the mail today by members which brings up to date many of the problems. In its latest brief the Legion has even discussed the problems raised by the launching into outer space of the Russian satellites.

In commending the minister on bringing forward this legislation, which has the effect of complying with the promises made, I want to say that I know that the present amendments will fill the immediate and pressing need. However, I urge the minister to continue to give consideration to all inequalities and difficulties that now exist and that will be coming up from time to time in connection with the war veterans allowance.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, I should like to warn the house that I am representing the minister and that if I speak now—

Mr. Speaker: Are there any other members who wish to speak?

Mr. C. F. Kennedy (Colchester-Hants): Mr. Speaker, on this, the first occasion that I have risen in the house, I assure you that I shall be very brief for two good reasons. The first is that the speakers who have preceded me have in no way indicated that any of them will do anything other than support the bill. Second, I would not want