

*War Veterans Allowance Act*

changes that had been made, and at that time I expressed the hope that we would be able to deal as generously with the war veterans allowance bill as we had with that bill. However I am afraid that the present bill falls far short of the requests made by the various veterans organizations of this country. The bill as amended provides an increase in the allowance from \$30 to \$40 a month for single veterans, and from \$60 to \$70 for married veterans. In addition, it removes the ceiling upon casual earnings. That is all to the good. But, as I say, it falls far short of the requests that have been made by the various veterans organizations. For instance, at the last convention of the legion a resolution was passed as follows:

Resolved that we instruct our dominion command to continue to press for basic rates of \$50 per month for single men and \$85 per month for married men.

When that question was being discussed in the committee—as a matter of fact, the matter had already been discussed and decided upon in the committee when the legion met in convention, and therefore we could not deal with it again—a motion similar to it was moved and lost by a very narrow margin. As a matter of fact, it was a tie, fifteen to fifteen, and the chairman cast the deciding vote. He had the very unpleasant task of having to decide the vote. It was decided strictly on party lines, the opposition all voting for the amendment and the Liberal members all voting against it. It is quite obvious that the rate proposed in the bill will not be a sufficient amount to give the veterans depending upon this allowance a real living income. They can get by and will be able to exist. No doubt the government will argue that they are existing today on the present rate and will continue to exist on this increased rate. The point is that, with the increased cost of living, the amount proposed is not sufficient to give them a real decent living allowance.

The second point raised by the legion resolutions passed at the convention reads as follows:

Resolved that the brief of the Canadian Legion be fully endorsed to the effect that veterans of imperial forces, domiciled in Canada for twenty years, be eligible for war veterans allowance.

This is another matter that was discussed in the veterans committee. Again that resolution was lost in the committee by a very narrow margin. It was voted down, thirteen to ten.

Mr. MacNICOL: Did I understand the hon. member to say it was defeated?

[Mr. Quelch.]

Mr. QUELCH: Yes, it was defeated in the veterans committee, thirteen to ten. Again it was on a straight party vote, the opposition all supporting the proposal and the Liberal members voting against it. It is well to remember that the men mentioned in the resolution had all served in the first war in the British forces and not in the Canadian forces. Some of these men had been domiciled in Canada prior to enlistment; but, owing to the fact that they had gone back to the old country, probably a few months or a year before the start of the war, they were not considered to be domiciled in this country, and therefore were not eligible for the allowance as they would have been had they been domiciled in Canada at the time of enlistment. Nevertheless these men have now been domiciled in Canada for twenty years. They have been paying taxes in this country; they have helped to contribute to the wealth of the country; they have raised families and in many cases their sons and daughters served in the second world war. There is a very strong sentiment in Canada today that these men should now be made eligible for the war veterans allowance.

The third point that was dealt with in the legion brief is as follows:

World war I veterans with service in Great Britain.

Resolved that the benefits of the War Veterans Allowance Act be extended to Canadian veterans who served in Great Britain only for a period of eighteen months or more during world war I.

This resolution was also brought before the veterans committee, and again it was lost by a very narrow margin. The vote on the resolution was thirteen against and twelve for. Again it was decided on a straight party vote, the opposition all voting for the resolution and the Liberal members voting against it, with the exception of one. One Liberal voted for the motion.

I believe that in the past the legion have taken a stand against England being considered a theatre of war, but at this convention at any rate they did urge that veterans who had served in England for at least eighteen months should be eligible for the war veterans allowance. Of course, if these three resolutions had carried in the committee we would have had a far stronger talking point in urging the government to give consideration to this matter.

The minister realizes only too well that it was a toss-up whether these resolutions carried in the committee or not. The margin was so narrow in one case, while there was a tie in