

*Veterans Affairs Committee Report*

At this very moment we have Colonel Blimp away on a mission playing hide and seek with the communists in an attempt to enter into diplomatic relations with communist China, a country whose leaders continue to blaspheme the closest ally we have—I hope—the United States of America. This government of ours wants to extend diplomatic relations to a gang of warmongers who gave military aid to North Korea in a war in which thousands of Canadian soldiers lost their lives. Before the government becomes pals with Mao Tse-tung and his pirates I suggest that it consider the friendship of war veterans of this country who through their patriotism in the three wars of this century assured the peace which allows them to sit in glory and arrogance determining the fate of our nation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Marshall:** What did we accomplish for national unity with all the millions spent on centennial year, that year of celebration during a period when we find ourselves, owing to the actions of this government, faced by a split in dominion-provincial relations which threatens our future? Would it not have been better to celebrate our 100th year of confederation by providing centennial housing for veterans and centennial pensions for those who made it possible for this country to mark 100 years of national life? This would have been something we could always remember, something with a mark of everlasting remembrance.

I repeat that national unity does not come from secret meetings with premiers. It does not come from prodding and teasing through the press or by antagonizing and giving false promises. National unity is created by people, the citizens of this country. It does not come out of the throat; it comes from within the body. It lies in the hearts of every human being who wants to live at peace with his neighbours regardless of race, creed or colour. And it has developed through the loyalty and patriotism of all Canadians whether English, French or of any other national origin. It comes from the sacrifice of the war veterans who offered their lives to make it possible for us to make the mistakes we are making today in repayment of that sacrifice.

• (12:20 p.m.)

How do we make this inner circle realize the needs of this country? How do we make

[Mr. Marshall.]

this group of conscientious objectors realize their duty to society? Certainly not by common sense or human reasoning. We must try to impress on them that they are availed of the opportunity to govern this country because of the sacrifice of those of our citizens who fought with distinction during times when the peace of our nation was threatened by Naziism and Communism. Yet we are flirting with exchanging ambassadors with this type of country.

There is not much to be gained by reviewing the specific issues at stake with regard to veterans problems. The minister is well aware of the excellent presentations forwarded by the various veterans organizations outlining in complete detail their observations on the burning issue of the moment—the 147 recommendations in the Woods report. For heaven's sake let us do something about the report so that we can increase the paltry pensions, as is recommended.

The cost of living is increasing, a fact recognized by everyone. Wages are being increased proportionately. I am sure not one member of this house can say, however, that a realistic appraisal has been made of the plight of the veteran and his dependants with a view to paying him a remuneration sufficient for him to live on. This, in effect, is the main basis of the veterans complaints.

I respectfully request the minister to try to impress upon the inner circle the real standard of priority that the Woods report should be given in the interests of hundreds of thousands of veterans. If the government is having trouble, then the standing committee members are there to help it. This is why they are on that committee. The heads of the veterans organizations are also begging to help. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) keeps preaching involvement, participation and dialogue. These groups want to dialogue, they want to participate and they want to become involved. So why the hell does the Prime Minister not practise what he preaches?

The veterans of this country do not want anything that is beyond reason. However, as a group they represent a good portion of those citizens of this country who gave this government a clear mandate. They also gave this government their confidence. It is the duty and responsibility of the government—indeed, it should be their privilege—to live up to their promises of equality for all Canadians.