

### Veterans Allowance Increases

Canadians have enjoyed for so many years, a freedom which made us the envy of many other nations which are faced with internal strife almost as a daily routine.

What Canadian, let alone the government of Canada or any Member of Parliament, would have imagined that internal disorder, that uprisings from minority factions, would threaten our democratic way of life at this time in our history? I mention this significant fact because it was not until there was a threat of violence, and indeed the sacrifice of a dedicated Canadian's life, that the country united as one behind the government in their decision to introduce measures to deal with terrorism within our country.

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

**Mr. Marshall:** Canadians also united as a nation when hundreds of thousands of our citizens offered themselves in world wars, not only to protect their own country but to offer and dedicate their lives to stop nations in other parts of the world from inflicting their will, their undemocratic and tyrannical philosophies on free living countries.

We, in Canada, are faced with a breakdown in our national unity because we have forgotten how true national unity is created in a country such as ours. National unity cannot be legislated by governments, by sitting around a conference table, by studies and commissions, or by presenting bills in Parliament. National unity is created in the hearts of people and passed on over the years because our ancestors suffered hardship in discovering and building Canada. We affirmed this unity between 1914 and 1918 and again between 1939 and 1945. Our war veterans pledged their loyalty to Queen and country and defended Canada against tyranny from without. These veterans fought not as people of English, French or any other origin, but each and every one of them fought side by side as comrades and as Canadians.

● (2:50 p.m.)

I think that this might be a good time to look again at these Canadian citizens who made the greatest contribution to preserve our peace through suffering, sacrifice and dedication. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we should take a lesson from the way they were able to maintain unity over the years. They did not remain strong, loyal and united by changing their colours, their flags, or their symbols to identify themselves. Nor did they remain united by distinguishing between members. All veterans in the Canadian Legion, or in any of the other veterans' organizations, are full fledged members regardless of race, creed or colour, or regardless of whether they are rich or poor. And they have the same crests of distinction, Mr. Speaker—each and every one of them—the same beret, the same coloured blazer. The only people in the veterans' organizations who get special attention are the poor, the disabled, the sick. These organizations have raised a good deal of the money to help these veterans through the sale of a red poppy of the same design for some 50 years.

[Mr. Marshall.]

These veterans organizations honour their dead with the same wreaths, and at every gathering they remember those who have fallen with these same words:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

And unless we do remember them, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to disintegrate as a nation. Unless we continue to remember those who are left to grow old, those who unfortunately were wounded and remain incapacitated, then we will surely have condemned those veterans who look to our affluent government for assistance.

Our motion today urges the government to implement at an early date, by way of the appropriate legislative amendments, the recommendations contained in the second report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, date June 9, 1970, and in addition to provide for early payment of adequate increases in the allowances under the War Veterans Allowance Act, as well as an increase in the basic rate of disability pensions.

I do not want to pre-empt the Minister, Mr. Speaker, but I spent some time in my office over the weekend re-reading his remarks, as reported in *Hansard* of June 20 last year, when we introduced another motion on veterans affairs. I am sure he will repeat many of the things he said then about the rapid increases in disability pensions from 1948 to 1968. He called the increases from 1964 to 1968—from \$1800 to over \$3000—rapid increases, and he referred to the increases in 1968 as healthy ones.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I was not here before 1968 but I have been here pretty steadily for over two years and I haven't seen anything happen very rapidly in 1969 and 1970. But I have witnessed, as we all have, a rapid increase in the cost of living in 1969 and 1970, in each and every month. In 1968, the increase was over 4 per cent. In 1969 it was 4.5 per cent. To date in 1970, it is almost that rate again. I have received appeals from all across the country concerning the rapid deterioration of bodies and lives, not only of the disabled war veterans of this country but also of many of the 4 million poverty stricken. Yes, there are lots of things happening rapidly in this Canada of ours, but they are all going rapidly wrong.

The minister has also stated on very many occasions that we should not act too rapidly in bringing about legislation because the review of the Woods committee was so complex and the ramifications so deep that it took them two and a half years to bring down their report. It should be understandable, therefore, if the government takes half that time to bring the report to fruition.

We agreed to this suggestion, as did all the veterans' organizations, and I list them: The National Council of Veterans Associations, the War Amputations of Canada, the Hong Kong Veterans, The National Dieppe Prisoner of War Association, the Nursing Sisters Association, the Canadian Corps Associations, The Canadian Paraplegic Associations, The Sir Arthur Pearson Association of War