

War Veterans' Allowance Act

In the words of the leader of the present government, in the words of their own leader, I ask why this situation should be permitted to continue which he states is unjust? The government has the power to bring in a bill to remedy this injustice about which their leader spoke with such eloquence in the house. Why have they not done so? Did they not mean what they said at that time? What is stopping them from doing it now? Nobody in the house has told them that they would not support them in that view. Certainly we expected it because it was put plainly not only by the present Prime Minister but by other members. For example, the present house leader, speaking on April 12, had this to say, as found at page 3477 of *Hansard*, just last spring. At that time the present Minister of Public Works, (Mr. Green), then in the opposition, said:

So far as war veterans allowances are concerned, some increases have been made of which we all approve, but the needs have not been faced as they should have been. The ceilings on permissive income have been increased somewhat, but when the new parliament meets they will have to be raised to such an extent that when a recipient reaches 70 years of age he will get his full old age security payment without any reduction in his war veterans allowance.

This is the pledge of one of my hon. friend's colleagues. The minister will not say that promise has been carried out. He cannot. He did not pretend it was being carried out. What I do not understand is why, now that they have the chance to do so, they should not carry out the promise which they held out and on the basis of which they now occupy the position they do.

I have known the present Prime Minister for a very long time, and in effect in the campaign he said, "I am not making these promises in any irresponsible way; I am making promises that we intend to carry out." Now, are you carrying them out in this bill? Here is where the minister was speaking.

An hon. Member: What did you do in the last 22 years?

Mr. Tucker: We are not talking about what the Liberals did, we are talking about what you are doing after being elected to office.

Mr. Cardiff: I told you not to worry about it.

Mr. Tucker: My hon. friend says not to worry about it. Is it any wonder that I worry when we meet right after the election and the promises made by the present Prime Minister are not being carried out?

An hon. Member: You did not seem to worry too much about these matters.

Mr. Fraser: After the 1953 election you did not keep your promises.

Mr. Tucker: My hon. friends asked for support on the basis that the Liberals should have done this but now when they are in a position to act they are not doing it. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is it not much worse for people who get elected on the basis of certain promises to ignore them?

Mr. Fraser: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tucker: You can laugh all you want to but I am sure that the hon. member who has laughed—I will not name him—was one of those who was most loud in his denunciation of the unfairness of this thing.

Mr. Fraser: Certainly I was.

Mr. Tucker: Why do you not get up now and say that you are not carrying out the promises you made?

Mr. Fraser: We have not been in office six months.

Mr. Tucker: Yes, but this is the first step you are taking now in regard to veterans legislation.

An hon. Member: Emergency legislation.

Mr. Tucker: You could have put this in the bill just as well as what you have. Is my hon. friend suggesting that it would take any longer to write into the bill a figure of \$1,500 than \$1,080? Does he require more than six months to make that change?

An hon. Member: You didn't do it in 22 years.

Mr. Tucker: As a matter of fact, hon. gentlemen opposite should not think that they are going to get away with not keeping the promises they made to the people by talking about what we did or did not do. They are in office now. They are the ones to whom the people are looking, and I tell them that if they proceed so flagrantly and defiantly to break their promises with regard to this matter the people will not think very much of them.

An hon. Member: Are you voting against the legislation?

Mr. Tucker: I must not let my good friend, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, get off scot free. I must admit that he was more cautious than some of the others over there. Here is what he said when speaking on July 6, 1956, as found at page 5751 of *Hansard*:

I want to emphasize this afternoon that one of the first things to which the Department of Veterans Affairs should give attention is this matter of increasing the ceiling on the war veterans allowance. For instance, take the veteran who has reached the age of 70 years. If he has no other income but his war veterans allowance, owing to