

*Veterans Affairs*

however, is one in which, every year, extremely important business could be discussed.

For instance, there are now two government resolutions on the order paper. One of them, of course, is not particularly important because it is more or less routine. The other, however, is important and should be discussed by a veterans committee. There should be other resolutions as well. I am not going to discuss the War Veterans Allowance Act tonight, but there is not a member in the house who does not realize that the situation with regard to that act is highly unsatisfactory to war veterans all across this country who are in receipt of that allowance. There should be a change in the War Veterans Allowance Act. I am hoping that a committee will be set up this year and that the War Veterans Allowance Act will receive consideration by this committee and by the government.

As I said a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to assist in talking out this resolution. It is a most important resolution. I sincerely believe that a committee of this house should be set up. I wish to express my strong approval of the resolution which has been moved tonight by the hon. member, and to express the hope that the house will give favourable consideration to setting up this year a permanent veterans committee of the House of Commons.

**Mr. Ray Thomas (Wetaskiwin):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat any of the arguments used by those who have already spoken in this debate, but I want to indicate my approval of this resolution and to express the hope that the government will see fit to set up this permanent committee. We have veterans' legislation coming up from time to time; and from all appearances we shall have such legislation coming up for quite a number of years. With a permanent veterans committee set up, it will be possible to deal with those items as they come up without having to wait—as I know we have had to wait in the past—for a number of pieces of legislation to come up, hold them back and lump them all in one bunch so the committee could be set up and take them all in one lot.

In addition, we find that the veterans' organizations hold their conventions annually. With a permanent committee set up we could hear their briefs and consider their recommendations without having to wait to set up any special committee. We regret that the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) will not be able to vote on this matter; but he is in the fortunate position

of being able to indicate which way he would have voted when he stands up to announce that he is paired.

**Mr. Cruickshank:** I have already stated that.

**Mr. Thomas:** That is fine. The hon. member can do it again.

**Mr. J. L. MacDougall (Vancouver-Burrard):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words in connection with this resolution. At the very commencement of my remarks I wish to say that I am in favour of the principle of this resolution with respect to the setting up of a permanent veterans committee.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, without my reiterating it now, we have a large number of house committees. We also have at various stages of development and, I might say, of impotency, special committees of the house. They are set up annually, and as the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) has already said, they seldom meet. Anyone who looks at this problem will have to appreciate the fact that as long as the cold war continues—and at the present time there seems to be no abatement of it—as long as we have the great number of veterans that we have from world war II, and as long as we have that diminishing number of veterans of world war I, it seems to me that the establishment of this committee is a great deal more essential than a lot of the other committees that are now recognized as established committees of the house.

In addition to that, there is the question with respect to the changing conditions of the veterans. Last year, as a member of the veterans committee, I supported Bill No. 181 because I felt it was a step in the right direction; not that it was the complete answer to the veterans' problems but at least a step in the right direction. I think it is the duty of all hon. members in all parts of the house to be interested in the welfare, health and well-being of every man who in the hour of national crisis as far as the freedom of our country was concerned, saw fit to enlist in one of the various branches of the armed services of our country. I do not know of any class of citizens within the Dominion of Canada possibly more entitled to consideration than the men who offered their lives in the service of their country.

That is why I wish to say very tersely and affirmatively that as far as I am concerned, and I am sure as far as the veterans' organizations and the general population and the electors of my own riding are concerned, they will support me one hundred per cent when I make a plea for the establishment of this committee at this time.