

Children of War Dead

some of the proposals in the brief submitted by the Legion to the cabinet. The Legion took a great interest in this act when it came into operation, and so, I understand, did the officials of the department. As a result of the close watching of the act by the Legion and by the officials, these difficulties were discovered. I think it was an excellent illustration of co-operation between the Legion and the officials of the department with respect to the operation of the act.

I want to add this, Mr. Speaker. I want to congratulate the department on the efforts they made to bring to the attention of veterans and their dependents the terms of this bill after it came into operation. I noticed advertising in certain papers and that Legion provincial commands were informed and as a result all Legion branches. I think that practice could be followed with respect to certain other veterans legislation that is amended and improved from time to time. I had a number of people who were pleased to receive that information by advertising in the press and through other channels.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, I hope the government will give further consideration to some of the other proposals made by Legion representatives on November 10. But this bill is not quite all that the former members of the veterans affairs committee would like to see before the house at this time. While it provides for a certain limited number of people who were left out because of unusual circumstances and unforeseen circumstances, it does not go as far as the Legion and a good many members of the veterans affairs committee would like it to go.

At this point I should like to quote a second recommendation made in connection with this bill, and made by the Legion when discussing this matter with the cabinet on November 10. The Legion made this recommendation:

That the Educational Assistance Act be amended to provide assistance to orphans seeking vocational training, provided they meet other qualifications required by the act.

We would further recommend that the benefits of this act be extended to orphans who complete the work of the first year of college in high school.

Then in addition to this recommendation the Legion representatives made this comment, and I am going to quote it because I think it is most interesting. I may say that I support it. They said:

It seems obvious that children, otherwise qualified, who seek vocational training have the same claim to assistance as do those who undertake college or university training. There is an extreme shortage of skilled journeymen in many trades in Canada today and this shortage is likely

[Mr. Herridge.]

to become more pronounced as Canadian industries expand unless a special effort is made to train such men and women.

I know that a good many members on this side of the house agreed with those proposals. When the bill was introduced at the last session we were disappointed that in addition to university and college training, it did not provide for vocational training. I for one cannot see why the children of deceased veterans who do not wish to go to university or college or to take academic training are not allowed the opportunity, through provision in this bill, to take vocational training. What a necessary thing that is in this country, Mr. Speaker. Look at the shortage of skilled carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, decorators, mechanics of various types, stenographers, stewardesses and machine operators. I think that industry in general—having regard to the development of our industries and the construction that is going on in Canada—requires an ever-increasing flow of these people who have obtained the skills which are obtained through vocational education and not generally through university or college education.

I make a plea to the parliamentary assistant and to the minister to use their influence with the government and to see if we cannot add one more amendment to this bill in order to make it as satisfactory as it should be. There are a large number of worthwhile children who are not able to receive assistance under this legislation because they do not desire to take university or college training. But if they had the opportunity to receive the assistance which is provided for those who take university or college training—which we appreciate greatly indeed and which those who receive it are appreciating greatly—in order that they may undertake vocational training, it would be the means of increasing in this country the working force of skilled artisans who are so necessary in our expanding economy.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the motion?

Mr. Brooks: Is the parliamentary assistant not going to make a statement?

Mr. Bennett: I will.

Mr. Speaker: If the parliamentary assistant speaks now, he will close the debate.

Mr. C. E. Bennett (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest to the comments and criticisms of hon. members opposite who have had a great deal more experience in veterans affairs than I have. As has been said, I think that this