

Veterans Rehabilitation Act

veterans have been accurate. I have no reason to doubt that the present brief is also carefully prepared and well worthy of study.

They deal with several points, but this evening I should like to emphasize two to the minister. The first is the position of the single veterans. There has been no increase in the amounts paid to them, and this brief states:

A sample poll taken among single student veterans at University of British Columbia in March, 1948, showed that 32 per cent of those answering said they could not complete their courses on their present income, and an additional 12 per cent said it was doubtful. Further, 90 per cent of all students polled worked during the summer vacation.

That is their review of the situation of the single veteran.

They also deal with the question of permissible earnings; that is, the amounts which students are allowed to earn before their grants are reduced. The brief sets out:

In the case of all groups the present regulations limit the earnings of a student veteran or his wife to \$75 a month or alternatively reduce his grant by any amount over \$75 earned. We know of no case where the husband and wife have been able to earn \$75 a month each thus making a combined "other income" of \$150. Under the existing regulations where the wife earns nothing the husband who earns over the \$75 a month has his grant reduced by the amount he earns over the \$75. While the possibilities of a man earning more than \$75 and still succeeding with his studies are limited, nevertheless, some possibilities exist. For example, some students have been able to obtain jobs as night watchmen under circumstances where they can study during the greater part of their working hours. In order to take such a job the student veteran must work the number of hours per month which the job calls for. If the job pays, for example, \$90 a month his grant is reduced by \$15. If he accepts only \$75 a month for a job which would normally pay \$90, in order to avoid reducing his grant, the net effect of the government regulation is to subsidize the employer, and often entails breaking minimum wage laws in the province of British Columbia.

In the case where the wife earns over \$75 like restrictions apply. Should a man's wife be earning more than \$75 per month the husband's grant is reduced to the single rate, hence if a wife is earning \$80 a month her husband's grant is reduced from \$90 to \$60.

And later on:

We are firmly of the opinion that the overhead cost of enforcing this regulation is far greater than the amount the government could possibly save by whittling down the grants of student veterans in this manner.

It is difficult to reconcile the present restrictions on earnings with the government's attitude towards self-help on the part of the student veteran and, therefore, we urge that all restrictions on earnings of student veterans be removed.

They go on to point out that this business of reducing the grant to student veterans is solely within the discretion of the minister

[Mr. Green.]

under the terms of section 13 of the act. No amendment would be required in order to enable the minister to change these regulations, because apparently they are ministerial. I suggest once again that the minister and his department give careful consideration to doing away with this restriction on veterans earning what they can get. I do not think it is helping the government; I do not think it is helping the country, and it is hard on the veterans themselves.

Mr. BENTLEY: When the minister spoke a few minutes ago he did not speak loudly and he was not facing this way. Did he say he was going to ask that this bill be referred to the special committee on veterans affairs?

Mr. GREGG: Yes.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the special committee on veterans affairs.

RAILWAY GRADE CROSSING FUND

INCREASE IN AMOUNT TO BE APPROPRIATED FOR
NINE YEARS FROM APRIL, 1948

Hon. LIONEL CHEVRIER (Minister of Transport) moved the second reading of Bill No. 201, to amend the Railway Act.

Mr. GREEN: May I suggest to the minister that this bill be allowed to stand since it is now five minutes to eleven?

Mr. CHEVRIER: I am perfectly satisfied to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. CHEVRIER: Tomorrow we shall resume the debate on the amendment of Mr. Coldwell to the motion to go into supply and the sub-amendment of Mr. Bracken. It is hoped that we shall be able to complete the debate on the amendment and subamendment before six o'clock, but if that is found to be impossible the debate will be adjourned until Wednesday at three o'clock in the afternoon. From eight o'clock until nine o'clock tomorrow evening we shall take public bills. After nine o'clock we shall take the second reading of the Vocational Training Co-ordination Act amendment, which is No. 6 on today's order paper. Then the second reading of the Unemployment Insurance Act amendment, which is No. 15 on today's order paper. Then the second reading of the bill to amend the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, No. 14 on the order paper, and the second reading of Bill No. 201 to amend the Railway Act, No. 7 on the order paper.

At eleven o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.