

that the matter was not urgent and that it was also before the courts. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, I want to state quite frankly that it is not my intention to discuss or to refer to any matter now before the courts as far as the veterans' taxi owners association of Montreal is concerned.

There are a large number of veteran members in the house, and it is hardly necessary to say that they and all other members are much concerned with anything that pertains to the welfare of veterans. That was ably demonstrated during the two sessions when the committee on veterans' affairs, consisting of some sixty members from all parts of the house, was sitting. Those members were able to sink and forget all party differences; they all worked together and produced a fine charter for the Canadian veteran.

I would point out that only a few days ago nearly a whole day was taken up in the house in discussing the welfare of 100 Polish girls who had recently come to this country. Those young girls were not citizens of Canada and Canada owed them absolutely nothing, morally or legally. The matter which I wish to discuss pertains to veterans who are Canadian citizens. They are all boys who served in the Canadian forces, many of them with long records overseas. They are veterans on whose behalf the government of Canada has expended large sums of money in the way of gratuities, reestablishment credits and other benefits. Let me say here that I do not think anyone in Canada begrudges one cent of the large sums that have been spent on behalf of our veterans.

When matters such as this have been brought before the house in the past I have observed that sometimes some hon. members are unkind enough to say that it is done for political purposes, political expediency or something of that kind. These veterans on whose behalf I wish to speak, some 500 in number, all live in Montreal. The majority of them are French and the remainder are of various nationalities but all are Canadian citizens. Until ten days ago I did not know there was such an association or company as the veterans' taxi owners association of Montreal, neither had I met any of these boys or had any communication with them.

Mr. KNIGHT: Did the hon. member say that the majority of these veterans were French?

Mr. ROSS (Souris): They are Canadians.

Mr. WHITE (Hastings-Peterborough): They are all veterans of the Canadian army.

Mr. KNIGHT: I understood the hon. gentleman to say that the majority were French.

Mr. HARTT: That is right.

Mr. MacINNIS: The majority are Canadians.

Mr. HARTT: Why should the hon. member be so surprised about that?

Mr. REID: You would not call me Scotch; I am Canadian.

Mr. HARTT: Of Scotch descent.

Mr. REID: I am a Canadian.

Mr. HARTT: You are of Scotch descent.

Mr. REID: There is only one nationality, Canadian.

Mr. HARTT: I appreciate that.

Mr. WHITE (Hastings-Peterborough): I regret that there has been any misunderstanding because I thought that I had made it clear that all these are veterans; I am sure I said they were Canadian citizens, that they had all served in the Canadian armed forces and that many of them had long records overseas. I proceeded to say that their number was in the neighbourhood of 500, that the majority of them were French-speaking and that the remainder were of various nationalities.

Mr. HARTT: That is all right.

Mr. WHITE (Hastings-Peterborough): I am quite sure that is what I said. Is there any objection to that?

Mr. KNIGHT: May I explain my position? I simply wanted to know whether they were French citizens or French-speaking Canadians.

Mr. MACKENZIE: They are Canadians.

Mr. WHITE (Hastings-Peterborough): I am sorry, I cannot say whether they are French-speaking or English-speaking. In my opinion it does not make a particle of difference.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): They all fought for Canada.

Mr. WHITE (Hastings-Peterborough): They are Canadian citizens. There has been set up in the government the Department of Veterans Affairs which is charged with the administration of all matters pertaining to veterans. I think it is right to say that in the administration of this department and in dealing with veterans affairs certain principles should be strictly adhered to, and I think three of those principles are most important. First, there should be absolute integrity on the part of all officials in D.V.A. in their dealings with veterans. Second, in the interpretation of legislation and regulations pertaining to veterans the spirit of the law rather than the exact letter of the law should be followed.