

*The Address—Mr. Fair*

last session and this session so far, in the house and throughout the country, I believe the government felt compelled to do something for those disability pensioners. That is perhaps not surprising when we realize that the government today, with their approximately 185 members, are here on the strength of a minority of the votes cast in the last election. Hence when the opposition was heeded, perhaps that was only right, because the opposition still represent a majority of votes throughout the country.

The fact that the Minister of Veterans Affairs made that announcement on Friday last is, I think, his admission and that of the government that the disability pensioners were not getting enough to keep them going on a decent scale. Having made that admission he also admitted—as did the government indirectly—that the recipients of the war veterans allowance are not getting sufficient to keep them at a decent standard of living. I therefore do not know of any better time than the present to bring in another announcement stating that the government will at this session make an additional payment to recipients of war veterans allowance. There is still plenty of time to do that.

I am fully aware of the fact that the government has stated that, at the 1952 session, a committee on veterans affairs will be set up, and that any action they may take could be made retroactive to January 1 of next year. But while we are having a few days of cold weather and snow at the present time, let the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the government not forget that before this committee, which is to be set up next session, will have an opportunity to report under ordinary circumstances, many cold days will have to be endured by the recipients of the present war veterans allowance and many of them will not have enough food, clothing or warmth in their houses to enable them to have the proper standard of living. So why not do it now?

The government has the idea of looking after many other people, but I do not know of any group in this country more deserving of protection than the group who went overseas and sacrificed everything. I do not intend to say any more on that particular subject at this time, except to quote a portion of an editorial appearing in the November issue of *The Legionary*, which reads as follows:

It is regrettable that the government did not see fit to have a parliamentary committee set up to deal with war veterans allowance during the current fall session so that the increase, whatever it may be, could have helped to tide the recipients over the coming winter months when expenses are heaviest. The government having announced its decision,

however, *The Legionary* can only express the fervent hope, which it feels sure all ex-servicemen and women will share, that when the amount of the increase is determined, it will be sufficient to enable these gallant old defenders of Canada's freedom to spend their remaining years in reasonable comfort, free from fear of want or outright poverty. Nothing less than that will satisfy their younger or more fortunately placed comrades—nor, we firmly believe, the citizens of this country generally.

I believe the official organ of the Legion states the opinion of 100 per cent of the members of this house, if they were only free to express their opinions.

In addition to the plight of the old veterans, there is another occupational group in Canada facing hardships and in many cases practically total ruin. I am referring now to my farmer friends in the prairie provinces. For the second year many of them have their crop out under the snow, and they are unable to pick up the pay cheque for which they have worked so hard all year because of the weather conditions that have prevailed. On September 25, 1950, after having about seven or eight days good threshing weather, there was a break in the weather and practically no harvesting was done after that date. Practically all the crop lay out under the snow during the winter. After having to wait for the heavy snowfall to melt away this spring, the farmers were compelled to harvest their 1950 crop before they could do anything about putting in the 1951 crop. After the excessive snowfall it took a considerable time for the land to dry sufficiently to enable heavy machinery to be brought in, so that it was late before planting took place. The weather did finally turn good, and as a result we had one of the best crops we have ever had in western Canada.

On September 25 of this year, the weather again turned bad, and very little harvesting has taken place since then. Some people have been able to thresh or combine some grain, but in most cases the grain is still in the field. All of the grain is either tough or damp. Under these conditions it is not possible to keep the grain over during warm weather. Many reports have been received on conditions out there, and one of the latest I have been able to get is an estimate made by the Alberta department of agriculture which deals with conditions in that province. It shows the following estimate for wheat: threshed, 43 per cent; in stook, 16 per cent; swathed, 28 per cent; standing, 13 per cent. In the case of oats, it showed 33 per cent threshed, 35 per cent in stooks, 18 per cent swathed, 14 per cent standing. In the case of barley it showed 54 per cent threshed, 21 per