

*War Veterans Allowance Act***WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCE ACT**

PROVISION FOR BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN FORMER
MEMBERS OF FORCES OTHER THAN
CANADIANS

Hon. Milton F. Gregg (Minister of Veterans Affairs) moved the second reading of Bill No. 180, to amend the War Veterans Allowance Act, 1946.

Mr. P. E. Wright (Melfort): Mr. Speaker, I think there is likely to be some discussion on this bill, and some desire on the part of at least some of the members that it should be referred to a committee. It being now five minutes to eleven, I would ask you to call it eleven o'clock and that I be permitted to adjourn the debate.

Mr. Gregg: I do not want to enter into the discussion at this late hour, Mr. Speaker, but we had a full discussion on the resolution. I am sure there were nearly twenty-five speeches, although it is true that some of them were quite short. The two items contained in the bill are extremely simple. There is nothing complicated about either of them. If there had been, I would certainly have asked that a committee be created to study them. But these two points are so simple that I am sure that at another sitting the committee of the whole could deal with them quite adequately; and if the house would agree tonight, I should like to see the bill pass second reading, if possible.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Wright: No, Mr. Speaker. I should like to comply with the minister's wish but I think there was a matter which was not decided finally when we were discussing the bill in the first place, especially with respect to the pensions for widows of veterans of the imperial army who had served less than twenty years in Canada but who, under the act as it stands at the present time, will not receive a pension. I think that this matter requires further discussion. As a matter of fact, I think there should be some amendments. If the minister is not prepared to discuss them in a committee, I feel that probably we would have to move some amendment on second reading, in committee, or on third reading of the bill. I therefore feel that I could not consent to have the bill given second reading at this time. I therefore move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

prize money for the last time in respect of the second world war to personnel of the navy, and to pay a proportion of the prize money earned into the benevolent fund of the Royal Air Force. In Canada we have made no decision yet.

The bill which will be introduced if the present resolution is adopted will propose a method of payment, and I would suggest to hon. members that we could discuss the whole matter better if we had the bill before us. I might just say this, that the amount involved for Canada is of the order of \$2,500,000. There has never been prize money paid in Canada as a decision of the Canadian government. The prize money that was paid after world war I was paid under an imperial statute by royal proclamation. It included personnel of the Royal Canadian Navy, as well as the personnel of the other navies of the commonwealth. There never has been any undertaking to pay prize money in Canada. The reason why prize money was instituted as an adjunct to pay has long ceased to be in existence because the pay of the personnel of members of the Royal Canadian Navy is on terms corresponding to that of the army and the air force. The suggestion that prize money was necessary as a kind of compensation for the loss of possible earnings has ceased to exist, particularly in Canada, where our benefits to veterans are on a more favourable basis than in any other country. Moreover, the payment of prize money to individuals of the navy would discriminate against members of the army and the air force who had similar conditions of service, similar rates of pay, similar pensions and who, in every respect, had about the same sort of conditions.

I would hope, Mr. Chairman, if it is possible, to have the resolution carried and the bill given first reading so that we could consider it tomorrow.

Mr. Pearkes: There is just one question I should like to ask arising out of what the minister has said. Is there any intention to give a portion of this to the army benevolent fund?

Mr. Claxton: No.

Mr. Pearkes: You referred to distribution.

Mr. Claxton: No.

Resolution reported, read the second time and concurred in.

Mr. Claxton thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 221, to provide for the payment and distribution of prize money.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.