

minister may feel that this is a pleasant experience for him, I am afraid I must tell him that many veterans in Canada, especially those who have waited a long time for this announcement, will be disappointed.

The previous speaker has referred to the poverty levels which forever seem to be above the income levels of veterans and other groups in this country. I join with him in urging the government to try to bring our veterans at least up to the recognized poverty level.

The minister's announcement, Mr. Speaker, deals with two main categories of payments, namely, pensions that are paid as of right, and allowances that are paid under a means test. With respect to the pensions that are paid as of right, the minister has announced an increase of 10 per cent, effective April 1, 1971. May I remind him that a short while ago the national veterans organizations of Canada addressed an emergency appeal to the government, pointing out that there was a crisis in the experience of veterans. That group, in a very responsible manner, urged that there be increases in veterans disability pensions of 6 per cent as of September 1, 1970, and an additional 6 per cent as of January 1, 1971. A number of veterans have written to me and complained that their organizations did not ask for more. I suggest that that total of 12 per cent, to be in effect by January 1, 1971, was a reasonable request and that we are short-changing the veterans by saying to them that their increase is going to be only 10 per cent and that it will not be effective until April 1, 1971. I hope that these payments can be made sooner. It seems to me that this piece of legislation ought to be dealt with before we rise for the Christmas recess.

With respect to the proposed increase in the war veterans allowance payments, the minister emphasized that the increase in this area is 15 per cent. I suggest that despite that increase, we shall still be keeping these people below the poverty line. What bothers me most about the amendments proposed to the War Veterans Allowance Act is that the ceiling on the total income that recipients of the war veterans allowance can have has been raised, not by the 15 per cent that applies to the allowance itself, but by a figure of only 11 per cent in the case of single veterans, and by only 10 per cent in the case of married veterans.

I ask hon. members to listen for a moment to what this produces by way of a result in actual dollars. Under the legislation as it now stands, it is possible for a single veteran to have, by combining his pension, his war veterans allowance and his old age security pension, an income equal to \$40 more than is the case for a non-veteran receiving the old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement. I think that is as little as it ought to be. Yet in this proposal, the single veteran will be allowed only \$26 more than is allowed to a person receiving the old age security pension and guaranteed income supplement. In the case of a married veteran at the present time, the ceiling is such that he can receive \$30 more than the married person who is a non-veteran. That figure is being reduced to \$16. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that is a case of short-changing. It is not good enough.

### Veterans Pensions

I hope when we get into the details of this bill, whether in Committee of the Whole House or in the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, that at least we will be able to get those ceilings changed. The most difficult part of the War Veterans Allowance Act is its ceilings. I know that it is difficult not only for the veterans but also for the administration, and it seems to me that at least the same percentage that was applied to the number of dollars being granted should apply to the ceiling. I think we might even go further. The two matters I hope we will deal with before this legislation is disposed of are the ceilings on total income in the War Veterans Allowance Act and the effective date of both of the proposed changes. April 1 is too far away. Many veterans will not live to see the increase.

[Translation]

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, the bill the hon. minister commented on just now purports to increase veterans' pensions.

The bill is certainly timely and I welcome it as requests for an increase of veterans' pensions have been made over a long period. I remember that several times, on behalf of my colleagues, I urged the government to review the relevant regulations in order to improve the pensioners' situation.

Our suggestion and representations have at last had concrete results. This increase in veterans' pensions is not a luxury and it will certainly not make millionaires of our veterans. We are convinced however that this adjustment will be an appreciable improvement, because under the amendment to the regulations as a result of the passage of this legislation, the higher pensions will surely increase the purchasing power of the veterans who greatly need it.

This is why we are vigorously supporting the proposals of the government, but following consideration of the bill, we will perhaps move some amendments to improve it.

At any rate, I am convinced that Canada will not be poorer, once the rights of those people who fought for freedom are recognized.

I can speak on good ground, because a number of veterans and present members of the armed forces living in my constituency have often asked me to make representations to the authorities, in order to improve their lot. When we hear statements such as the one made today, we must co-operate and be pleased with the fact that the government has finally decided to do something really worthwhile.

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[English]

### AUDITOR GENERAL

ALLEGED CONSPIRACY TO DESTROY OFFICE—REQUEST  
FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION  
UNDER S.O. 43

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 43 I ask the unanimous consent of the