

*The Address—Mr. Thomas*

**Mr. Hodgson:** Let us change the government.

**Mr. Anderson:** I quote the following:

The lack of confidence on the part of 450,000 dairy farmers as to the future of the industry as a result of the unfair competition created by inadequate controls on substitutes manufactured from cheap foreign produced oils. (An increasingly large portion of these oils, at prices of only 12 cents to 15 cents per pound, are imported without duty of any kind. The balance, from a country which has banned the import of Canadian dairy products, pay duty of about 1½ cents a pound only.)

The production, manufacture, processing and distribution of dairy products in some 2,000 dairy plants provide a direct or indirect livelihood to 17 per cent of our population. In contrast, dairy substitutes are produced by about ten companies, the majority of which are packing houses and large international soap concerns.

The decline in the dairy industry has become so acute that in 1951 Canada, an agricultural country, imported 21 million pounds of butter; 10 million pounds of cheese; 6 million pounds of non-fat dry milk powder and was unable to supply sufficient fluid market milk to meet the demands of many urban centres in western Canada.

Just a few years ago dairy products were among Canada's biggest exports. Today, with a deteriorating international situation we are not able to meet our own domestic needs. This is a national problem.

Unless these trends are halted immediately, prices for all milk products as well as beef and veal (about half of which come from dairy herds) will become scarcer and more costly.

From the *Gazette*, under date of November 7, 1951, we get the following:

The dairy industry is too important and too vital a source of food supplies to be allowed to expire, or nearly so, by a process of default and indifference.

There is another small matter I should like to bring to the attention of the house. I do not know how serious hon. members may consider it, but I think it is serious. I refer to the lowering of the water table in some parts of Canada. I know districts where gas wells have been drilled and farmers have had great difficulty in obtaining sufficient water for their livestock. Every new block of housing and every new industry coming to our cities and smaller towns adds to this difficulty. We are in a period of expansion that cannot and must not stop. I believe we are overlooking one important and never-ending source of supply, namely that provided by rainwater held in cisterns. Furthermore, it is free. The needs of any household, apart from cooking, could be taken care of in this inexpensive way.

**Mr. Ray Thomas (Wetaskiwin):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words with respect to the amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Quelch); and my words will be few indeed. First of all I should like to thank the government for the pension legislation for veterans. At the same time I was amazed to see that the

[Mr. Anderson.]

government failed to recognize the need of another group of veterans who are in equally distressing circumstances, and who are often worse off than the pensioners. Speaking on this subject the hon. member for Melfort (Mr. Wright) said he was sure all members of the House of Commons who are veterans would support the amendment to the amendment. I fear, however, that after seeing the attitude taken by some government members last spring in the veterans committee I fail to share his optimism.

At the present time the war veterans allowance is \$40.41 for single and \$70.83 for married veterans. To say the least, these amounts are inadequate. The last increase in the war veterans allowance was given in 1948, when the cost of living index stood at about 155. The first representations for a further increase came in April of 1949, when the index stood at 160.8. The present index stands at 190.4; and there is no doubt in my mind that when the new index figure is given at the first of the month it will be even higher.

I should like to read briefly from the brief presented last spring to the veterans committee by the Canadian Legion. They said, in part:

If we were consistent with our figures in 1947 we would now be asking for more than \$65 for the single man and about \$113 for the married person. We are, however, repeating our request for \$50 for the individual and are asking \$100 for the married couple. This departure from our former brief in regard to the married couple is noteworthy but it is made necessary by the cold facts of existence. Actually, according to the latest figures supplied by the Toronto welfare council as of November 1950 (which are appended to this brief), what we ask for is far below minimal living requirements. On the basis of that organization's research, a single veteran requires a minimum of \$93.34 per month and a married veteran without children \$153.43. It will be noted that the present rates are less than half of these minimal requirements and the W.V.A. which originally recognized that the condition of these men was attributable to war service, now functions on something less than a minimal relief basis.

This brief was presented last spring when the cost of living index stood at 179. As has been pointed out by previous speakers, and most ably by the hon. member for Acadia, the war veterans allowance now is worth far less than it was even at the \$40 limit many years ago.

I agree wholeheartedly with the Legion and the other service organizations that this war veterans allowance should be boosted considerably. Also I agree it should be boosted at least to the amount asked for by service organizations. However, for my own part I would far rather see the war veterans allowance tied to the cost of living index and put on an escalator scale. Even if the increases asked for by the various veterans organizations were brought into effect the