

Pension Act and Other Acts

ernment will pay close attention to the particular pleas we are getting from these bodies; also, that close attention will be paid to their plea for more generous administration of the provision for exceptional incapacity allowances.

Sir, we welcome this bill. It is unlike some other bills, since there is nothing in it that we oppose. We like it all. Even so, as the last speaker said, there is still more to be done for the veterans of this country, such as a guaranteed income, and the government, parliament and people of Canada must meet that obligation. I hope we shall do it soon.

[Translation]

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I have a few words concerning Bill C-208, which increases veterans pensions and I want to say that we are also satisfied with the increase granted by the government.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that veterans have been asking for an increase because the cost of living goes up constantly. Therefore, the increases we are giving now will soon become useless. We will have to start all over again.

This is why I want to ask hon. members and the administrators of our country to see if they could not try to adjust the economy so as to check spiralling prices. We boost pensions because prices have risen; now that we have increased pensions, we will again increase prices. The problem is not solved.

Soon both veterans and all pensioners in our economic system will still be at the same point. The economy is unbalanced; we are nearing bankruptcy.

As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) was saying our production was close to \$100 billion this year and consumption near \$60 billion. In other words, we still have about \$40 billion in capital. So, instead of taking revenues or money from the pockets of taxpayers, and they have precious little as it is, we could draw the necessary funds from the total revenues of national production.

• (1640)

As long as we take revenues, salary increases and taxes from the pockets of taxpayers, we will keep on disturbing our economy.

Veterans are certainly right in asking for increases, because they must do with a meagre pittance and are almost at the rationing stage. So, we owe them something, because they went to war. What for? To safeguard our freedom and democracy.

After the war, we were not supposed to have any economic stagnation. We were supposed to live entirely and fully free, and the economy was to be put at the service of all Canadians. And we realize that this has never been achieved. Actually, approximately 20 per cent of our population enjoys the benefits of our economy; the remaining 80 per cent live in poverty, from day to day and in slums.

If there are so many slums, it is because the interest rate is too high. Our citizens lack the means to build new houses. Those who do build them must pay interest rates as high as 4, 5 or even 6 per cent. The government does

not concern itself with establishing interest rates which would permit lenders to make a reasonable profit, while allowing those who need a house to buy one. At the present time, we are all tenants in this country and we pay excessive interest rates which in part accounts for the increase in the cost of living and prevents our citizens from living their lives properly.

Then, what should we do to enable all our citizens, including our veterans, to have a decent life? We must set up a well balanced economic system so that we can put an end to the increase in the cost of living and the increase in taxes.

As long as we fail to solve the issue, we shall ask for increases which do not bring any solution but do cause new problems because, under the present system, we shall pay for the increases out of the pockets of those who already do not have much.

Mr. Speaker, we have been speaking for a long time of our proposed solutions designed to balance our economy and correct the mistakes of our present system. In fact, we admit that the present system is the best in the world, but we realize that it lends itself to much abuse, something which must be identified and corrected.

We must balance our economy in order to provide every person with what he is entitled to get. Thus, all the goods we have in hand might be used to meet people's requirements, thus ensuring their economic freedom and security.

[English]

Mr. William Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand): Mr. Speaker, I agree with what has been said by my colleague, the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), on some of the major criticisms of this bill. However, I will say that we welcome what is being done for our veterans.

I have just returned from the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs where we completed a clause by clause study of the bill and had a frank discussion with the minister and the officials of his department. They explained some of what we considered last night to be apparent anomalies in the bill. The minister reassured us with regard to our fears in connection with the old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the war veterans allowance by telling us that the total benefit would accrue to the veteran. This was one of the fears that I and others voiced in this debate.

The standing committee also heard representations by representatives of two prisoners of war associations, the national association and Hong Kong veterans. While it may be argued that they did not have anything to do with this bill, they did ask for increased benefits and further recognition. That is what this bill is all about, increasing benefits to veterans.

The National Association of Prisoners of War represents those who were incarcerated in prisoner of war camps in Europe, particularly those taken prisoner in the infamous Dieppe raid when, despite the valour of our Canadian soldiers, many were taken prisoner. They asked a very small thing from the government. While I agree that something like this cannot possibly be incorporated into this bill, I urge the government to take note of the