

means test. If, as rarely happens, the recipient of such benefits is extremely well to do, he will hopefully be paying a lot of income tax on all of his other income, regardless of its source. Surely such benefits which are paid to recipients by the Government of Canada should not be subject to means tests.

An interest income amounting to \$500 a year is not extremely uncommon these days. If a veteran who is receiving benefits is able to save money and earn a few hundred dollars a year in interest, I submit that he should be able to keep that income without having anyone looking over his shoulder and hitting him up for payments under the tax system.

The benefits of a veteran who is drawing either a disability pension or war veterans allowance should have nothing to do with his benefits under the old age pension or GIS. The benefit that is received from the Department of Veterans Affairs should not be deductible from the GIS. Again, a recipient of benefits will pay tax on those portions of income that are taxable. Should a beneficiary of the Department of Veterans Affairs happen to be well to do, he will be paying taxes for other reasons.

I do not know whether or not the war veterans allowance should be integrated with the GIS and old age assistance plans. At first blush, I do not think that they should be integrated. Prior to coming to Parliament, I experienced such an integration where I was employed. We thought we would be able to receive the benefits of both a company pension plan and the Canada Pension Plan. We thought that they would be stacked, and they ended up being integrated, so we received a little bit of each instead of all of both.

It seems to me that any benefits that veterans are entitled to receive should be exempt from deduction from any other benefits like old age assistance, pension, guaranteed income supplement or Workmen's Compensation Board payments. Of course, incomes earned outside of those kinds of benefits will be taxed in the normal manner.

Although the Government has yet to act on it, we support, as do all Members of the House, the increase to the pensions received by the Dieppe veterans, and particularly those who were held in shackles as prisoners of war for months and months. We believe that even 40 per cent of the pension would be little enough. We are only asking that that benefit be raised from the present 20 per cent to 40 per cent. We can do no less than that for those veterans.

Finally, I would like to mention that just two days ago ceremonies were held and tributes were paid in this House, all over Europe and particularly in Normandy, regarding D-Day. It is not only D-Day that we were commemorating. It is a large number of other occasions, whether it was Hong Kong, Vimy Ridge, Dieppe, Normandy, Monte Cassino, Sicily or wherever. For those who did not come back, we must see to it that what they did was not done for nothing. We must see to it that those who did come back are entitled to more than what we are presently providing. Even though we are doing relatively well compared to other countries, it is nothing to brag about. Mr. Speaker, as sure as you are sitting there and I am standing here, if those who did not come back were here now,

they would be saying on behalf of those who did come back that we must do more than what is done by this Bill.

● (1620)

If you walk, Mr. Speaker, among the gravestones of a cemetery of Canadian veterans, you will see that, whether they be 17, 18, 19, 21 or 22 years of age, they come from all parts of the country. There are English, French, Indian, Ukrainian and other names of the soldiers buried side by side. The first thing which went through my mind is that we must see to it that what they did was not done for nothing. Whether it is for peace or for the welfare and good order of our country, and most particularly the welfare of our veterans who did come back, we can do no less than that. This is the fourth, fifth or sixth occasion in 16 years on which we have dealt with amendments to veterans legislation. Every time it has been chintzy governments who have held back. They could find a lot more money to spend on a lot of other things. However, they always held back, chiselled, or would not do what Members from all sides of the House would have supported in record time.

I would like to comment briefly on the subject of our Indian veterans. Anyone who lived in rural Canada where there were Indian reservations knows about the activities over the decades of some, if not most, of what were then called Indian agents. Most, if not all, are now gone. The Indian veterans were inadequately treated, compared to the rest of the veterans, but treated even worse once they returned to the reserve. I know that there are not many involved, but even if there are only a few hundred, it seems to me that there is room for special consideration to make up for what was either prevented from happening or should have happened a few decades ago.

I hope we can deal with this Bill in the next few minutes. We will support it. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Hon. Member for Victoria or myself to move any amendments, because that would call for the spending of money and we are not allowed to do that. I just wish that the Minister who presented the Bill on behalf of the Minister of Veterans Affairs would bring in one or two minor amendments that would improve the legislation. If that could happen, the Government would be surprised how quickly the House would give its approval.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time, and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Corbin in the Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Shall Clause 1 carry?

On Clause 1—