

*The Address—Mr. Knowles*

suggestion advocated by the Canadian Legion in their latest brief presented before your parliamentary committee.

We regret that no mention has been made by the government of any action to be taken to raise the allowance paid to the recipients of war veterans allowance.

Mr. Pratt goes on to say that there are 900 members of this particular branch, and he indicates that many of those members are seriously affected by the rising cost of living and face difficulty in getting along on the small amount of the war veterans allowance. In the last sentence he says:

In our opinion a single recipient of war veterans allowance should not receive less than \$50 a month and a married recipient not less than \$100 a month.

The next one I pick up is from Mr. J. H. Larkin, secretary of the St. James Branch No. 4 of the Canadian Legion at Winnipeg. It is dated November 6, 1951, and is addressed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. It reads:

Dear Sir:

The St. James branch No. 4 of the Canadian Legion B.E.S.L. has heard with pleasure that the government has decided to increase immediately the basic rates of the veterans disability pension. We trust that the increase will be not less than the 33½ per cent minimum advocated by our dominion executive.

While dealing with the disability pension is a step in the right direction, this branch would stress most strongly that the same conditions which make this increase so necessary and so urgent, apply equally to the provisions of the War Veterans Allowance Act. A delay in adjustment of allowances until next year will produce great additional suffering.

Mr. Larkin goes on to conclude his letter by expressing the hope that the government will act on this matter at this session. I emphasize the tone of both these letters—and I have others—to the effect that the local Legions, the men back home, really appreciate the action that has been taken with respect to disability pensions, but they are amazed that parallel action has not been announced at this session with respect to the war veterans allowance.

Another letter I have is dated Winnipeg, October 31, 1951 and signed by J. McNeil, president of the Weston and Brooklands branch of the Canadian Legion. It is addressed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and reads in part as follows:

Dear Sir:

We are very pleased to note that the present session of parliament intends to bring down legislation increasing the basic rate of ex-service men's disability pension, and we are anticipating this increase will conform to the request of the Canadian Legion.

It is with regret, though, that we also note there is no intention to increase the war veterans allowance at this same session, but rather to wait until the 1952 session, at which a veterans committee would be set up to consider its relation to the old age legislation.

This branch of the Canadian Legion are seriously concerned about the financial status of the so-called

"burnt-out" pensioners and request that your department do something at the present session to alleviate their condition.

I have other letters, which I will not take time to read now, from the Winnipeg tuberculosis veterans section, from Mr. Cairns, secretary-treasurer of the Manitoba and northwestern Ontario command, from Mr. P. Johnson, chairman, pensions and rehabilitation committee of the imperial division at Winnipeg. I have others, one from the Fort Rouge branch and so on. All through these letters runs the same thought, namely that the local branches of the Legion, the men back home, who are close to the people affected, are grateful for the decision taken by the government to increase the disability pension at this session, but they cannot understand why the same action is not being taken with respect to war veterans allowance. After all, the men on war veterans allowance are just as seriously affected, if not more so, by the increase in the cost of living. In most cases the amount they have to live on is less. Surely, if the government responds to the case for the one pension to be increased, the case is equally strong that the war veterans allowance should be increased, and that the increase should be made at this session of parliament.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes of the time at my disposal to indicate how matters work out with respect to some specific cases, particularly at this time when certain pensions are being increased. For example, the previous speaker had a good deal to say—in fact he devoted the whole of his speech to the subject—with respect to old age pensions and the removal of the means test. It is also the case that the disability pension rates are being increased. There are rumours around that there might be some change in the pension plan of the Canadian National Railways. So it is that I know quite a number of veterans who, hearing of these various changes, have dared to hope that their position might be improved. Yet I will show, by reference to cases about which I shall speak in a moment, that there are men who served this country, particularly in world war I, for whom as matters now stand there is no possibility of any improvement in their position, despite the fact that all these pension arrangements are being revised at the present time.

The first case I pick up is that of a veteran living in Brooklands, Manitoba, which is a village just on the outskirts of Winnipeg. I would ask hon. members to follow the facts in this case, so far as the dollars and cents are concerned. This is a world war I veteran who at the present time has a disability