

Pension Act

Mr. Cruickshank: After what happened yesterday anybody can announce anything, but I believe that is what is going to happen.

Mr. Green: Don't lose heart.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Don't take it to heart so much.

Mr. Cruickshank: I will announce the policy with respect to what is going to take place in Toronto tomorrow. The west will show the east where the sun rises and sets. I am very proud of my association with the veterans affairs committee. As I said, I have the greatest admiration for the hon. member for Royal—

Mr. Brooks: Mutual.

Mr. Cruickshank:—but on reflection I think he will agree there is one thing we should not do. If there is one committee that certainly should not be brought into the field of partisan politics it is the veterans affairs committee.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): I should like to say a few words on this measure. The resolution reads:

That it is expedient to bring in a measure to amend the Pension Act to provide for increases in the rates of pension for disability and for death under the act.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that all hon. members of this house were delighted with the minister's statement to the house on Friday, November 16. They were happy to know that at last the government recognized the need of the disability pensioners in this country. I am sure that all hon. members, regardless of the party to which they belong, were relieved to know that the government had finally decided to abandon the supplementary allowance with its employment test, medical test, and in some cases financial means test. I remember when we were sitting in the veterans affairs committee last session there was strenuous opposition on the part of a number of members of that committee to this departure from former Canadian pension principles. I am sure all hon. members are glad to know that the government has returned to the long established principle of the payment of pensions according to disability incurred. By introducing this measure, the government has decided to erase that unfortunate blot on Canadian pension history.

I am sure that all veterans organizations in this country, as represented principally by the Canadian Legion and the National Council of Veterans, must find great satisfaction in knowing that their efforts have borne fruit in this satisfactory government action. In fairness to these representative bodies, we

[Mr. Fulton.]

must say that the government's decision is a tribute to the Canadian Legion and to the National Council of Veterans. It is a tribute to their understanding of the needs of disability pensioners throughout Canada, and to their presentation of the facts. It is a tribute to their arguments supporting the facts, and to their eternal vigilance on behalf of disabled veterans and their dependents in this country throughout the years.

Mr. Cruickshank: Hear, hear.

Mr. Herridge: I am pleased to know I have the endorsement of the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank). I know that we on this side always realize that we have the sympathy and support of the hon. member in these veterans matters.

In my opinion the commendable position the Legion has taken is well stated in a recent editorial which I read in a good weekly paper published in British Columbia, the *Revelstoke Review*. I am going to read a paragraph—

Mr. Cruickshank: In what riding is that?

Mr. Herridge: Revelstoke is situated in the Kamloops riding. I know the editor quite well, and I believe he is a firm supporter of liberal principles. He is a man of considerable balance and good judgment. Unfortunately at the present time he is a member of the coalition—

Mr. Fulton: Are you speaking of the editor of the *Revelstoke Review*?

Mr. Herridge: Yes.

Mr. Fulton: Don't calumniate the man, because he does not support that party.

Mr. Herridge: If I am in error in that, it is because my judgment has been based on the reasonable and progressive nature of his editorials. I am quoting from the *Revelstoke Review* of Thursday, November 15, 1951. The editorial is entitled "Practical Remembrance". It reads:

Rev. H. S. McDonald, in his remembrance day address in the United Church last Sunday, told his comrades they need to remember the dead; living veterans in need of assistance; and thirdly, their heritage as Canadians. Remembrance day ceremonies in themselves call attention to the many who made the supreme sacrifice, while appreciation of our heritage ought to be inspired by individual common sense. Remembering the needy veterans, on the other hand, calls for positive action and eternal vigilance. . .

In all these matters which are so essential to the welfare of the war veteran, the Canadian Legion has played an outstanding role down through the years. There has been progressive improvement in the treatment of veterans since 1918, although the ultimate has not yet been reached. Had there been no strong body to champion the cause of the needy veteran, it is doubtful if even the most benevolent intentions of our governments would have reached the stage of today's programs.