

a small increase in the veterans allowance. I do not want to rehash all the matters that came before the committee or what has been said this afternoon, but I would read to the minister from the report of the veterans affairs committee, where at page 661 I find this:

Mr. White: This comes back to the argument I raised the other day. It really means that the veteran who is getting both the veterans allowance and earning the full amount is not going to benefit in any way by this increase.

The Chairman: Correct.

Mr. White: Even if you carry Mr. Harris' motion, it will still mean exactly that.

The Chairman: That is correct. The only difference is it does remove it from the questionable category of a supplementary grant, and raises to \$485 his maximum receipts. Are you ready for the question, then?

So this really means that the veteran who, under the old act, was getting \$365 a year if single, and double that if married, and earning the full amount available, will not benefit in any way under the amendment which the minister now proposes. Does the minister disagree with me?

Secondly, with the amount restricted to \$365, plus whatever the veteran's casual earnings may be, I fear that the amendment will have a tendency in some cases to make the veteran who is able to work and earn something decide that he will simply not earn that extra money if his allowance is to be cut down to the maximum of \$485. I would have thought the minister would leave the earnings at \$250 for a single man and \$365 for a married man or a widower with children. It was pointed out in the committee that a large number of widows will benefit by the act, and I am very glad that they will receive the benefit of the act. On the other hand a large number of veterans who are receiving the allowance today will not benefit in any way from the amendment which the minister now proposes. I would suggest to the minister that, even at this late date, he consider amending this section to provide that the earnings shall be increased to at least \$250 since, if the amount is left at \$125, many veterans will not benefit in any way, because they will refuse to earn extra money if their allowance is to be cut.

The minister and his department and the government must have taken some notice of the storm of protest at the legion convention a few weeks ago. The legion requested a further hearing by the committee, which was granted, and I should like to read one paragraph from the supplementary brief presented by the legion and dealing with this increase. It will be found at page 2:

The dominion council is greatly concerned about an increasing number of veterans who are finding it impossible to secure any employ-

ment and must subsist solely on the allowance. Certainly in these days, the allowances provided by the bill under consideration are quite inadequate for food and shelter alone.

I would impress on the minister those last few words, "are quite inadequate for food and shelter alone." No member of this house would say that the request of the legion that the basic rate for single men and widows be \$50, and \$85 for married men and widowers with children, is unreasonable. As I said, I ask the minister, even at this late stage, to reconsider and recommend to the cabinet, first, that the veteran be allowed to have larger earnings, and second, that the recommendation in the legion brief be implemented.

Mr. GREGG: I do not propose this afternoon to refer to all the things that have been said, because most of these questions were fully discussed in the veterans affairs committee. I want to say, first of all, that I and the officials of my department realize fully that these matters affecting veterans are unfinished business and will remain unfinished business long after the end of this session, even if Canada should not take part in any more wars.

The discussion this afternoon has ranged about two items connected with the bill. One is the amount of the increase. The other is eligibility: the eligibility of those who served in Britain only in the first war; and secondly, the eligibility of the British Canadian veterans who came to Canada after the old war and resided in Canada for many years but who was not resident in Canada prior to his service in 1914. The arguments on that have been discussed here and elsewhere. I am not going to say that the increase we have provided in the bill is such as any member of the veterans affairs committee or any member of this house would like to see, but I would point out that since 1930 the War Veterans Allowance Act has been twice improved in that respect. It was \$20 in 1930 and stands at \$40 today for the single man, and \$70 for the married man. The government felt, in a year when the pensions bill had been increased, the first increase since 1926, that the committee had incorporated in this bill a reasonable increase which is looked upon as a permanent increase. We are now at a peak time as to both cost of living and employment. It is true, as has been stated this afternoon, that the older veterans cannot all get work; nevertheless a surprisingly large proportion of them are working, a great many of them full-time and many of them part-time. They are anxious to work, and I doubt whether many of them will give up useful and interesting works just to keep themselves within the terms

[Mr. White (Hastings-Peterborough).]