

The Address—Mr. Argue

But the key to any really effective civil defence program is voluntary effort. Now that most civil defence organizations are ready to receive and train recruits, individual citizens must come forward in their thousands. To us in this house, aware of the necessity for what must be done in these days to ensure fellow Canadians against the effects of enemy attack, aware of the determined efforts of the federal government to play its part in this vital work, there is a clear responsibility to give leadership in our own communities in our local civil defence activities.

I know that many members are already active. But if we are not to close our eyes to reality, we more than any other group of Canadians, I suggest, should be leaders in developing Canada's civil defence program. By coming forward and volunteering to play our part as good citizens in our own communities, we will help to encourage the general citizens' movement now developing to support the efforts of the civil defence authorities.

Our objective in Canada is to build a responsible and yet realistic program for the protection of our civilian population. As a nation, our first goal is still to work with the free nations to preserve the peace. At the same time we are readying our military defences in case war is forced upon us. But all the while, and moving steadily from the planning into the training and operational stage, we are building a nation-wide network of co-operating civil defence organizations to ensure that if war should ever come upon us we will be ready to protect the lives and property of our fellow citizens.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to continue. I confess freely that I read a good part of it, but I wished to put it on record in full so that it might be of some service, even to my friend who interrupted.

Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in speaking this afternoon I wish to emphasize to the government once again the really catastrophic situation that faces the farmers of western Canada with respect to disposing of this year's crop and their serious financial predicament, particularly for the farmers who have been unable to harvest any of the 1951 crop. I wish also to repeat that I am in full support of the demands of the Canadian Legion with regard to an increase in the war disability pension and the war veterans allowance.

I believe that the government and the people of Canada have a great duty toward our veterans who have helped in the fight for democracy in two world wars. I believe the people of Canada are most anxious that

[Mr. McCusker.]

their government meet the veterans' request in full. I want to make it abundantly clear that I support the Canadian Legion's request for a one-third increase in the war disability pension. While I welcome the resolution which forecasts an increase in the pension, nevertheless I regret it has not been stated therein that the request of the Legion would be met in full. I am most anxious that veterans on war veterans allowance shall have their pensions increased at least to the amounts requested by the Canadian Legion, namely, \$50 for a single man and \$100 for a married man. My opinion is that with today's cost of living these amounts are most modest and could be even higher. The November issue of *The Legionary* contains an excellent editorial with respect to the war veterans allowance. It points out:

It is regrettable that the government did not see fit to have a parliamentary committee set up to deal with war veterans allowance during the current fall session so that the increase, whatever it may be, could have helped to tide the recipients over the coming winter months, when expenses are heaviest. The government having announced its decision, however, *The Legionary* can only express the fervent hope which it feels sure all ex-service men and women will share, that when the amount of the increase is determined, it will be sufficient to enable these gallant old defenders of Canada's freedom to spend their remaining years in reasonable comfort, free from fear of want or outright poverty. Nothing less than that will satisfy their younger or more fortunately placed comrades—nor, we firmly believe, the citizens of this country generally.

I further suggest that the government should give the same treatment to those veterans now receiving war veterans allowance as has been accorded to other Canadians who will be in receipt of the old age security pension. I think it would be most unfair to these veterans, and it would be dragging the means test in by the back door, if the war veterans allowance is reduced in any way to those recipients of it who qualify for the no means test old age pension. I believe the Canadian people are generous and want their government to meet the request of the Legion so that veterans on pension may be better able to meet the high cost of living.

Turning now to the situation confronting the farmers of the prairie provinces, I should like to outline first of all some of the facts of the present catastrophe. The first is that the 1950 crop was exceedingly large, was severely damaged by frost and consequently was of relatively low grade. The present crop is even larger, and because of adverse weather the grades are a good deal lower than normal. Much of the grain is being graded tough or damp. Last year's crop was large and we find, according to the grain