

*Veterans Affairs Committee Report*

The lesson I learned is that international relations do not come about from talks around a conference table among members of governments. They happen and are created in the hearts and minds of people, people who know what suffering is and elect us to office to preserve peace. They do not happen by the threat of the pressing of a nuclear button by powerful presidents or prime ministers.

I should like to express my opinion of what I thought was a serious error in the planning of the trip. I refer to the failure to communicate the "tongue" of all Canada to those of all origins who participated in the many ceremonies to dedicate memorials and in the laying of wreaths to those who fell on D Day. Those responsible for delivering our message failed to deliver the message of a really full Canadian participation. This might be only my opinion but I wanted the young 18 year old soldier who took part to understand from his ambassador why his Canadian comrades of the same age died and lay in the cemetery instead of having been able to take part in the free Canada in which we are now living. I say this not to criticize but only because I know that those of French origin with whom I fought side by side 25 years ago and with whom I renewed valued friendships would want me to do so.

I therefore express the appreciation of all who participated in the Canadian delegation to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Dubé) and his staff and our thanks for giving us the opportunity to take part in an exercise which, outside the realm of politics, brought together in a sense of international participation a spirit of loyalty, patriotism and good will. Even though it came about because of war, I hope it will strengthen our will for and devotion to peace in the world.

In participating in today's debate I am fully cognizant of my responsibility as a member of this house to the most important segment of our population, the war veterans of Canada. In speaking on behalf of my party it is my duty to try to impress on the government of Canada their responsibility to our veterans in their consideration of the priorities with regard to the needs of this country, and to try to find the reasons why the needs of war veterans, especially those who are disabled or incapacitated, seem to hold a bottom spot on the list.

• (12:10 p.m.)

For the past four years, and especially in the last 12 months, this party has shared the concern felt by many thousands of veterans

[Mr. Marshall.]

and their dependants throughout the land over the creeping paralysis of indifference which has been and is becoming more prevalent as to concern for those people of whom the late Sir Winston Churchill spoke in the early 1940's when he said, "Never was so much owed by so many to so few." It is easy to forget just what those words mean and to whom they referred, and to become involved instead in superficial issues which only cause controversy and discontent.

It is obvious where the fault lies, Mr. Speaker. I do not think it lies with the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Nor can I conceive that it lies with the hon. members opposite who sit with us as members of the Veterans Affairs Committee, especially those who are veterans themselves. Even if they wanted to do something about the problems I have in mind, their efforts would be stultified by the dictatorial attitude of the cabinet, an attitude which becomes more evident every day. The fault lies with the inner circle of this government, that group of a few toy soldiers who seem determined to destroy the stability of this country while in their dreams of grandeur they think they are improving conditions and bettering our relationships with other countries of the world. A good example of the position taken by the government is its attitude in ignoring the continuous pleas of both opposition members and their own members for consideration to be given to increasing veterans allowances and pensions in line with the increasing cost of living.

What do we get as an answer, Mr. Speaker? We get a shrug of the shoulders and the response that we cannot afford it, or an implication of that kind. We are told that if we increase pensions we shall have to increase taxes. We are supposed to believe this tale of woe by the leader of this country—the lame-brained excuse that in order to raise pensions for war veterans it is necessary to raise taxes. We do not have to raise taxes in order to increase the salaries of the Prime Minister's staff. Pretty soon there will not be enough room in the galleries for them, there will be so many.

We do not have to raise taxes to write off \$125 million on the Expo debt with a shrug. We do not have to raise taxes to find millions of dollars for foreign aid. We can squander millions of dollars through lack of control in spending on the *Bonaventure*. We can ease tariffs to the extent of \$80 million for the big motor giants without raising taxes. But when it comes to increasing modest benefits to the very people who are responsible for our being