

*Supply—Veterans Affairs*

Amps, the Canadian Pensioners Association, the Canadian Corps Association, and other veterans bodies could be considering the various problems and preparing briefs on them. I am sure that when their representatives appeared before such a committee they would present briefs that would be extremely helpful. They have always done so in the past, and would do so again. My question is whether or not the minister would be willing to recommend the setting up of a committee on veterans affairs at the next session.

My next question has to do with the medals issued for service in the recent war. There has been discussion in the house from time to time about those medals being issued without the names inscribed thereon. I suppose it would be too late now to do anything about the medals for the men who returned, but I believe the minister should give consideration to calling in the medals which were sent out to the next of kin and having the names inscribed on them. Some months ago when in Vancouver I was interviewed by a father who had lost his son. He was deeply concerned about this whole question. In fact, he felt so deeply he wrote a letter to the minister. I have a copy of it, and I should like to read a paragraph or two which I believe sum up the situation just about as well as it could be done. He writes:

If these medals had borne my son's name, I would have been glad to receive them and proud to place them in the family archives. It happened that my son died well. But they do not bear his name. They are just four medals picked from four stock-piles, packed, not too tidily, into four little boxes and sent with instructions on how they should be worn.

Worn by whom?

He goes on to say he is returning the medals, and then we find this paragraph:

I suggest the government could, even now, cleanse from the national record the more hurtful feature of its disgraceful parsimony, by recalling at least all medals sent to next of kin and having them inscribed with the names of the men who earned them.

There is nothing more that one can add to that request. I do hope the minister will be able to give us some assurance that there is a possibility these medals will be called back for the names to be inscribed thereon. Those are the two questions upon which I should like to have a statement from the minister, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Herridge:** Before the minister replies, I should like to support the remarks of the member for Vancouver-Quadra concerning the calling of a veterans affairs committee for 1951, to consider veterans legislation. This proposal was made by the Canadian Legion some months ago, and they are very emphatic about it. Now that close to three years have

[Mr. Green.]

elapsed since the committee last sat, they believe that the government and the country have had some experience with the important legislation which was drafted or adopted at that time. The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra mentioned hospitalization. In British Columbia, while we are well pleased with the services of the administrator and the officials of the department in British Columbia, I think there are certain aspects of hospitalization which should be brought to the attention of the committee and discussed. The same thing may be said with regard to the merchant navy which the hon. member speaking previously has mentioned. That is a situation that wants clarifying. A good many people in this country believe that something more must be done for the merchant navy veterans if justice is to be done. Then there is the question of the Veterans Land Act. The Veterans Land Act administration has, I should say, been effective and on the whole successful; but there are certain local situations which arise, certain details of administration and certain weaknesses in the legislation that should be discovered and considered by a committee.

Then again, there is the administration of the various benevolent funds for veterans. I think it would be wise to have a report from the administrators of those funds to a veterans committee in order to see if the legislation and the administration can be improved. I therefore urge the minister to give consideration to the proposals of the Canadian Legion—those are the proposals we are actually advocating this afternoon—that a special parliamentary committee on veterans affairs be called to discuss these important questions.

**Mr. Higgins:** I have one question to ask the minister, and I will not delay him long. It is in connection with the supplementation of the imperial pensions. In order that the minister may be aware of the situation, I believe an answer was given last year which may be found at page 443 of *Hansard*. The question was asked by Mr. Church and the reply was given by the parliamentary assistant to the minister. The question was as follows:

1. In view of the devaluation, will consideration be given by the government to providing imperial veterans residing in Canada some allowances for devaluation of the pound sterling?
2. Will any action be taken?

The reply was:

Canadians who were domiciled in Canada prior to their service with the British forces have their British awards of pension supplemented by Canada to an amount equivalent to that paid to Canadian pensioners under similar circumstances. The recent devaluation of the pound sterling will consequently not affect such pensioners.