

*Veterans Affairs*

best way to expose and to express the needs of the war veterans. At one point, they even expressed their satisfaction with the way the Government had always listened.

• (1640)

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, whenever representatives of the Canadian Legion appear before the Committee, we must realize that it is an institution that was established by veterans themselves and which is heard, respected and also consulted by the Government. Only yesterday, someone was saying, and it is not the first time I have heard this, that the Canadian Legion is being consulted and that the Government, when it is considering legislation related to the welfare of veterans, consults the Canadian Legion. And in this connection, Mr. Speaker, we must not forget the tremendous sacrifices made by some of our veterans for this country.

The Royal Canadian Legion represents 99.9 per cent of our veterans, since it represents and works as we have already heard . . . It represents the Canadian Indian Veterans Association. There are local branches of the Royal Canadian Legion across the country, and every town, at least in Quebec, has its local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, where veterans will go if they need financial or social assistance or if they have marriage problems.

I wonder whether my good friend, the Member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) has considered the consequences if the Government agreed to form a new committee. I am sure my hon. colleague from Red Deer spoke in good faith, but I wonder whether this would not delay implementation of the measures proposed by the Woods Committee. It would be most unfortunate, and I am sure the Hon. Member would agree, if the implementation of certain programs were to be delayed, since when the Legion made its proposals as it did recently, when it asked for an increase in benefits for funeral expenses, I believe the Government considered this request and increased the benefits which were \$125 at the time, to \$500 or \$600. The same applies to casual workers. A representation was made by the Royal Canadian Legion, asking Veterans Affairs and National Revenue to examine certain problems that arose for veterans. The petition submitted by the Royal Canadian Legion on behalf of veterans was accepted, and now, veterans are able to benefit. Thus, representations by veterans are routed to their local branches which are elected by other veterans. The local branches forward representations and requests to the provincial commands and the Dominion command each year, and these requests are forwarded and considered and in fact become a policy or representation of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Considering the record of the Legion and its success in taking such action, I wonder whether a new committee is really necessary. I wonder whether there is not a real risk that approval and implementation of certain measures will be postponed because a new committee would want to examine

such proposals. Will this committee, like the present committee, if I am not mistaken, also have a majority of veterans who truly represent their former comrades at arms? I know that when petitions are made on behalf of constituents or a branch of the Legion in a municipality or riding, the Minister always listens very attentively to the grievances and representations put forward by Hon. Members, and the Ministers of Veterans Affairs I have known, the present Minister (Mr. Campbell) and his predecessor, have always been very attentive to petitions based on such representations. In fact, the Canadian Government and Canada have an outstanding record as far as veterans welfare programs are concerned. The measures that were approved to provide for the veterans of 1939-45 were adopted before I got back, since I was still in Europe when they were approved. This means that the Government—in fact all the Governments since the First World War—has been very receptive to the grievances and representations submitted through the Royal Canadian Legion by our veterans.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people are quite aware of the great sacrifices our veterans have made for their country, and I think that the words "They Serve We Care" do reflect how fairly we treat them. Indeed, our comrades in arms, be they from France or Great Britain, may very well feel somewhat envious of our veterans because of the benefits they enjoy. Besides, keeping in mind the care we have given them and the fact that we did go out of our way to make sure that justice was done to those who had given their lives to save democracy and everything else we held dear at that time when we were as young as 18, 19 or 20, I for one consider that the Governments, this one and others before, have fully discharged their responsibilities and, to those who have put their lives on the line and gave so much, we remembered and we can proudly say "They Serve We Care".

Once again, the representations we receive from the Royal Canadian Legion are passed along to the Government through the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. As I said earlier, the representations made by the Royal Canadian Legion are heard and examined, and we consult the Legion. Personally, Mr. Speaker, I do not see the need or even the wisdom of creating another institution which would be asked to do exactly what the Committee already does very well.

*[English]*

**Mr. Neil Young (Beaches):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to speak too long on this particular motion by the Hon. Member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers). It is a matter which I think has been studied, debated and discussed for many years. It seems to me that having a long discussion today will not add anything new to the debate. It is a motion which deserves the support of the House and should be acted upon by the Minister.

In his motion, the Hon. Member for Red Deer refers to recommendation No. 7 of the report of the Standing Senate Committee on Health, Welfare and Science entitled "They Served, We Care". The recommendations contained in the