

provision for these supplemental payments, and I think it is in this bill that we should deal with all those pieces of legislation that are related to it.

As hon. members are aware, there is a schedule attached to the bill that lists 15 different acts that are being amended, and then it has a sixteenth item that is a sort of omnibus paragraph, naming many other acts that might also be affected by this legislation. In other words, the government quite clearly in this bill went out of its way—and I approve of this—to amend all those statutes that had to be amended to carry out its purpose. I contend, therefore, if it was the intention, so far as the government was concerned, that all these people should get the benefit of the increase it should have made the necessary provision in this legislation to amend the War Veterans Allowance Act.

• (3:40 p.m.)

On an earlier occasion, Mr. Speaker, I read a sentence or so from the letter which the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) enclosed with the cheques that went out a month or so ago to all retired civil servants, their widows, retired armed forces personnel or their widows, retired RCMP personnel or their widows, and all the rest of them. The sentence is over the signature of the President of the Treasury Board and the letter is dated February 2, 1970. The key sentence is:

I would also like to point out there will be no means tests or needs test in this connection and that all in receipt of pensions whether former employees or widows and dependents, will benefit from the new provisions.

I do not think I am doing any violence to that sentence if I pick out the key words to make clear what the President of the Treasury Board said to between 70,000 and 80,000 people. The key words are "all will benefit". Since December 19, I have received hundreds of letters, and I have one on my desk here and now, which just came in on Saturday. I found it particularly sad to receive a letter like this just a day after our debate of last Friday. I shall not quote the letter verbatim because I do not wish to identify the writer, but it is from a widow in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. Like a good many letters that I have received in the past few weeks it expresses great pleasure that this battle has been won and that pensions are to be increased. The lady mentions the letter she received from Mr. Drury, as she put it, informing her that all pensions would be increased

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970 effective April 1, 1970. Most of these people know that April 1 really means the end of the month, or they soon will know it.

The letter I received expresses thanks to the President of the Treasury Board and to the government for the increase and I have to say that the lady indulges in some kind remarks about my part in this over the years. In fact, she says she could not let the matter pass without writing to thank me but my modesty keeps me from reading that part.

Some hon. Members: Please do.

An hon. Member: Go ahead.

Another hon. Member: We will let you.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): After the press gallery skit of Saturday night my modesty will not let me. The lady goes on to say how much it is going to mean to thousands of people like herself. At one point she is thanking me, not only on her own behalf but on behalf of all concerned. As an afterthought she adds the hope that in her case the war veterans allowance which she receives will not be reduced when she gets the increase in the pension as a widow of a civil servant.

How does one reply to a letter like that, Mr. Speaker? How does one reply to a widow who has expressed great gratitude for what has been done, who thanks me for my part in it and says that she is speaking for thousands of people, and I know that she is. I have to write back saying that I am grateful for her kind words but I have to tell her that under the legislation as it stands, the bitter truth is that she will get the increase in the pension as the widow of a retired civil servant but that the war veterans board will reduce her war veterans allowance by the same amount.

An hon. Member: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, hon. members can make their comments but this is a disgrace. Letters like this will come to hon. members in the next two or three months as veterans and their widows on allowances discover that the words of the President of the Treasury Board are not being kept. I call upon this government to stand behind what the President of the Treasury Board stated when he sent this letter to the 70,000 or 80,000 people in receipt of pensions, telling them that "all will benefit".

As hon. members know I have taken up the matter by asking a question in the House of