

*The Address—Mr. Knight*

and revenues going up to \$354,600,000. Here, if you like, is too much cash, but it is in the hands of the government and its minister. It is an embarrassment of cash, but this government forsooth has not enough money at this session to increase the pensions paid to burnt-out pensioners under the War Veterans Allowance Act. Under that act a single man only receives \$40.41 per month, and that under a means test. He can only have \$10.42 additional monthly income if he is not to be prejudiced in the receipt of even that pittance. The married man is perhaps in a worse position. He receives \$70.83, and the ceiling on his total income is \$91.66. Items counted as additional income under the means test are such things as disability pensions and the old age pension, if the recipient is eligible for either of them. Inflation is described as too much cash chasing too few goods. Here is a class that has not too much cash; the government has seen to that. In view of the cost of living the goods that can be purchased by this class are indeed few.

We have not heard so much in this House of Commons about the plight of the veteran's widow under the War Veterans Allowance Act, perhaps because the widows are fewer in number. They, too, should receive immediate consideration. The government has said that at the next session it will set up a veterans committee to consider these things. I appeal to the government to consider these matters at this present session. Just a small fraction of these accumulated and embarrassing millions to which I have referred would set right the great wrong which has been done to these underprivileged classes of society. The request made by the Canadian Legion on their behalf is not unreasonable, and should be granted now. The executive committee of Saskatoon branch No. 63 of the Canadian Legion has written to me about the matter. They have sent me a copy of a resolution which I shall put on the record. It reads:

Whereas those veterans whose sole or main income is an allowance under the War Veterans Allowance Act are suffering hardship due to the increasing high cost of living and,

Whereas the government of Canada has announced the situation will be referred to a veterans committee of the House of Commons in 1952 for consideration and recommendation;

And whereas the plight of many of these recipients of war veterans allowance is desperate now—

The word "now" is underlined.

Be it resolved that the government of Canada be urged to bring in a bill at the present session of the House of Commons, increasing basic rates of allowances under the War Veterans Allowance Act so that such allowances will at least provide food, clothing and shelter for the recipient.

A few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the food production of the world. We, and particularly those of us on this continent, have wasted our heritage. We have slashed our timber lands; we have lowered the water table; we have impoverished our soil; we have caused soil erosion, and all for the sake of immediate gains. We shall have to call a halt. If these acts of commission are reprehensible, no less reprehensible has been our neglect to supply available water to our parched lands that they may become more fruitful. This brings me, as one would suspect since I am a Saskatchewan man, to the question of the Saskatchewan river development project. A successful irrigation scheme would be of inestimable value to that part of the country. Possibly the greatest problem facing Saskatchewan is caused by the slow growth of her population. The mechanization of wheat farming, the increased acreage of the average farm, mean that less and less people are needed for the process of growing the great quantities of grain which we produce. Climatic conditions work against the establishment of mixed farming.

Oh, it is easy for the arm-chair farmers to say that the farmers could keep more cattle. Most of these arm-chair farmers do not realize the climatic conditions under which farmers work, particularly in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan. More and more farmers are living in the towns, and under today's conditions one cannot blame them. We need more mixed farming; we need more stock raising, more industry and, above all, we need more people. A partial solution at least would be to bring water to the lands which are often parched for the lack of it. Thus it is that, as I have often done before, I urge the government to proceed forthwith with the great irrigation project that is planned. Government speakers, and in particular the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner), have spoken generally in favour of this scheme. They have helped to create a public demand for it, but as yet they have done little in a practical sense to bring the plan to fruition.

This is not a political thing. It should not be looked upon from a partisan viewpoint, although political capital has been made of it. Last summer I attended a great meeting of farmers held at Outlook, Saskatchewan. These people were in earnest. They want action, and they want it soon. I had hoped that something would have been done before now. The minister's speeches before the last two federal elections seemed to give us some assurance of that. In February of 1949 I made a speech on this subject. I admit