

of residence of 12 months in order to qualify so that they could leave again. It would seem to be a bit of a hardship. Was that point considered?

Mr. LALONDE: Yes, it was, Mr. Pugh. This is what we were faced with. Under the present legislation, if a war veterans Allowance recipient absents himself from Canada his allowance is suspended. If he does not return by the end of six months from the date of his absence his allowance is cancelled. At that time he has lost all rights under the War Veterans Allowance Act. This is the legislation as it stands today.

Now, the instructions we were given were to extend the rights of the recipients during a longer period of absence. If we were to try and take care of the cases which you mention, through some arbitrary decision, we would be faced with the necessity of legalizing something that was done perhaps the previous year, and which was not legal at that time. We would also be faced with this dilemma: where do we draw the line? In other words, if a person left Canada a year ago, two years ago, or for that matter five years ago, they should all be treated on the same basis. Therefore, if you try to extend the legislation by attempting to give a retroactive effect to the present bill, you would have to go all the way to the principle that the war veterans allowance can be paid anywhere in the world at any time.

It would not be the same as the decision to extend the period of absence. It would have to be a policy decision, to the effect that the war veterans allowance is now payable at any time anywhere in the world.

Mr. PUGH: That sounds logical.

Has the department any figures in regard to those who were in receipt of war veterans allowance who have quit the country and gone to some other country but are still on the rolls, as you have suggested? Are there many in this category?

Mr. LALONDE: We do not have the statistics that you have mentioned. We know that at the moment there are about 170 per month who absent themselves from Canada, but the great majority of them have returned within the six month period.

Mr. PUGH: I am referring to those individuals falling in the category that Mr. Herridge has suggested, who have left the country altogether and have the expectation of ending their days, perhaps, in England. Would you have any figures indicating how many fall into that group?

Mr. LALONDE: Would you know the number Mr. Bowland?

Mr. J. G. BOWLAND (*Research Adviser, Department of Veterans Affairs*): The number of war veterans allowance recipients for all of Canada during the calendar year 1959 whose allowance were suspended, that is to say, they remained away less than the six month period were veterans, 265, and widows, 266.

Mr. LALONDE: You are speaking of those that were suspended?

Mr. BOWLAND: Yes.

Mr. LALONDE: How many were cancelled, do you have that figure?

Mr. BOWLAND: The number who were discontinued during this period because they left Canada were 23 veterans and 9 widows.

Mr. PUGH: That would probably be a fair average for each year, I imagine.

Mr. BOWLAND: It is very hard to determine that. Some veterans and widows may change their plans with the new legislation.

Mr. PUGH: I suppose probably in that category some of the recipients are deceased now?

Mr. LALONDE: Oh, yes, some of them would have died.

Mr. BOWLAND: It is a very hard thing to assess.