

Pension Act

veterans, but I regret that possibly partisan politics are being brought into the matter. So far as the veterans of my province are concerned, we want to see justice done to them without worrying about who gets the credit, which party, which individual or which province. I am sorry that partisan politics have been introduced into the discussion by a member for whom I have the greatest respect, knowing how he has served his country in two great wars.

Mr. Brooks: I was merely stating the facts; that is all.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Sometimes they do not like them.

Mr. Cruickshank: I think my record in the veterans affairs committee will show where I stand so far as my fellow veterans are concerned. I have not always agreed with members of my own party or with those in the opposition, but in so far as my stand is concerned I am perfectly willing to rely on my record. I think we should forget political advantage. Some people should be satisfied. I have forgotten the exact phrase but I think it is "sufficient unto the day". "Sufficient unto yesterday" should satisfy them enough for one day.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): That is just a beginning.

Mr. Cruickshank: Let us not worry about politics with respect to this matter.

Mr. Murray (Cariboo): May I correct the quotation? "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof".

Mr. Cruickshank: I was not referring to the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Murray).

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): He is improving it.

Mr. Cruickshank: We have accomplished a great deal through the efforts of the veterans affairs committee on which I had the privilege of serving. As I have stated before that committee and in the house, I believe that is mainly due to the great efforts and influence of the Canadian Legion throughout the Dominion of Canada. Let us try to build it up and not tear it down. I agree with one thing the hon. member for Royal said. I am not allowed to refer to a certain type of pension, and I do not want to be called to order. I have been here since 1940, I have never yet been out of order, and I do not want to be now. You can imagine what I might like to say about certain other legislation. I should like to say to the minister that it is not clear in my mind—and I think I am in order—what the situation is with respect to dependent parents, and I would

also link with that compassionate awards to mothers and wives. I think these two classes should be taken into consideration, because of the increase in the cost of living, in exactly the same way as other pensioners.

I believe the pension should be made retroactive. Whatever the advantage may be, it definitely should be made retroactive. As the hon. member from Labrador—for Royal, an outpost of Canada where there is cold weather, and I admit it is far colder there than in other parts—said, this is the time of year when those on small pensions need assistance if they need it at all. As I understood the announcement of the minister—and I want to be corrected if I am wrong—I believe the awards are to be made retroactive, and I should like to know to what date. That may have been stated before and if it was I am sorry I did not hear it.

One thing with which I cannot agree is the unemployability supplement. However, as I understood the minister—and surely this is in order because it was announced by the minister himself—it is to be discontinued as from the first of the year. I believe that is correct. As I stated before the veterans affairs committee, it has not worked out satisfactorily in my own province. The officials in charge there have been most fair about the matter. If I remember correctly, we estimated we would have 780 recipients, and the last I heard we had approximately 1,400 applicants. It did not work out in the rural districts although it may in urban centres. I understand it is to be discontinued as from the first of January. There is one thing I want to know for purposes of information only. Is it correct that those who have been in receipt of it temporarily will continue to receive it up to the first of January? Accepting the correction of the hon. member for Cariboo, let us not drag politics into the matter. We have had an assurance from the minister on behalf of the government and I thought his statement was very fair. The Legion asked for 33½ per cent but they are getting more than that. I am not allowed to mention that other matter but I will take it up at the next session of parliament inasmuch as I have been assured—and the minister nods his head in agreement—that legislation will be introduced to correct the abuse so far as that other group of pensioners is concerned. The minister agrees that legislation will be brought down to provide for them properly and it will be made retroactive to the first of January.

Mr. Fulton: Is this an announcement of government policy?