

should consider the advisability of tabling in the Senate the response of the government to this recommendation.— (*Honourable Senator Bonnell*).

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, I am rising to support the motion. It seems that I am always supporting the government on their motions!

I should also like to support Senator Doody on his viewpoint that no legislation should be held up unduly by not being debated. In that Bill S-15 has been on the order paper since March 1, everyone certainly must have had time to consider it well. Perhaps we will get rid of it next week as well, and send it to committee.

Honourable senators, first, I should like to congratulate Senator Marshall and Senator Phillips, who, as two veterans of the last great war themselves, always consider the veterans, their widows and orphans, and always support any legislation that seems to be of benefit to this group of Canadians.

I, on behalf of this side of the house, wish to support the motion:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the *War Veterans Allowance Act* and Part XI of the *Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act* in order to provide for the payment of an allowance, as defined under each of those Acts, to any Canadian veteran or qualified civilian of World War I, World War II or the Korean conflict, or to any widow or orphan of such a veteran or qualified civilian as defined in those Acts, whether or not such veteran or qualified civilian, widow or orphan has resided in Canada at any time since either of those wars or the Korean conflict, as the case may be;

The only thing I would say, honourable senators, is that the motion does not go far enough. I would also add, "That it is time that those veterans who served in Canada be considered for the war veterans allowance."

There have been many great veterans of our armed forces. Because they were so good at their jobs, they were kept here in Canada to teach other veterans. Whether they were in the air force, navy or army, they signed up for active service and wanted to go overseas, but, because they did such an excellent job as teachers and instructors, they had to stay here in Canada in those roles and did not have an opportunity to go to England or abroad. Because of that, today they, or their widows and orphans, are penalized. They are no longer eligible for the war veterans allowance, the aging veterans program or the VIP program, as it is now called—all those benefits that others are taking advantage of because they happened to have gone overseas for a short period of time.

I would like to see a section added by which the government would give the war veterans allowance to those veterans of the two great wars and the Korean conflict who served in the Canadian area for at least 365 days—put a limit on it!—so that they or their widows and orphans could receive some benefit.

I also think there could be a section to cover veterans who clean up after a war is supposedly over. For example, in Korea the war is still not "over," because an armistice was never signed; there was just an agreement between the officers. Many of our Canadians went to Korea, after that agreement between the north and the south, to help clean up the mess. Many of the mines that had been laid were still there and many of our soldiers were injured; but they are not eligible for pension because the war was apparently over. There should have been a time limit of one or two years after the deadline of 1953 so that they would still be eligible for a disability pension or war veterans allowance.

I understand that that happened in the first great war, and that a year or two afterwards the veterans who had gone overseas after the actual conflict or after the armistice had been signed were still eligible for war veterans allowance or disability pensions.

I would also have added a section to support the many Canadians who were in the clean-ups in Chalk River and Nevada and were exposed to atomic bombs, atomic energy and radiation and who have since died with leukemia or cancer. No doubt their diseases were caused by radiation, but that is difficult to prove. Nevertheless, the United States of America has passed legislation giving the benefit of the doubt to the veteran, so that, if a veteran who has died with leukemia or cancer was exposed to radiation in Nevada or anywhere else, his widow is automatically eligible for a war pension.

• (1520)

However, that is not the case in Canada. Here, we have no such legislation. Our veterans must go and fight their cases before the chief medical officer and try to prove to him that the reason they are suffering from leukemia or that their colleagues have died from the same disease is that they were exposed to radiation. However, the connection between radiation and these cancerous diseases is a hard thing to prove. The veterans get many differing medical opinions, and some of these opinions are that there might be no connection whatsoever; other opinions are that there could be a connection. Be that as it may, it seems that there is a very high incidence of death from leukemia among veterans who were involved in the Chalk River clean-up or the Nevada clean-up.

Honourable senators, perhaps I would also have added to this motion a section concerning the wives of veterans so that, after their husbands had died, their pensions would continue; they would retain their pension rights and their eligibility for war veterans allowance. Perhaps they could even receive free drug benefits, since many of the widows of war veterans pay exorbitant costs for their drugs today. They are in situations where they are often alone, paying rent and maintaining a household. When the main pensioner has gone, life is sometimes very difficult for widows and orphans left behind.

There are a great many areas the Department of Veterans Affairs should be looking at to help these veterans and widows of veterans, whose numbers, it should be added, grow fewer every year. If you read the monthly *Legionnaire* magazine, you will see on the last two or three pages lists of names of many of