

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 14, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

INDUSTRY

IMPORTATION OF VOLKSWAGENS BY STUDEBAKER COMPANY—EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with my undertaking of Wednesday last I wish to table herewith copies of certain exchanges of correspondence with the Studebaker Company of Canada Limited and the Volkswagen Company Limited concerning the importation of certain cars. I point out that there is one letter I have not yet obtained from the Department of Industry. I ask the permission of the house to file this with the clerk of the house as soon as it has been obtained.

Mr. Speaker: Has the hon. minister leave to table the documents?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

INCREASE IN DISABILITY PENSIONS AND WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCES

Hon. Roger Teillet (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on October 13, I indicated that it was my intention to present to the house a measure dealing with disability pensions and war veterans allowances. Supplementary estimates will be introduced later in this session to provide the funds required for an interim increase in disability pensions and increases in war veterans allowances.

Hon. members will of course have an opportunity, upon introduction of these estimates, to fully examine the increases proposed. For two important reasons, however, I felt I should announce the details of these increases to the house now; first to reassure those in receipt of pensions and allowances that the government recognizes their need for additional income at this time; and second, with the anticipation that parliament will see fit to approve these adjustments, to permit departmental officials to begin the administrative work of calculation and adjustment in sufficient time to make

the additional amounts available by Christmas. As I indicated earlier, it is proposed to make the date of these increases effective September 1, 1966.

● (2.40 p.m.)

It is proposed to increase the basic rate of disability pensions by 15 per cent.

It is proposed to raise the war veterans allowance single rate from \$94 to \$105 a month and the permissible income ceiling from \$133 to \$145 a month. The married rate will be raised from \$161 to \$175 a month and the permissible income ceiling from \$222 to \$245 a month. Identical increases in rates and ceilings will apply to recipients of allowances under Part XI of the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act.

Hon. members will recall that the Prime Minister concurred some time ago with the recommendation that these rates be reviewed every two years and as a consequence a study on how best this might be done has been initiated.

Until the results of this study are available it is obvious that an appropriate level of pension rates is difficult to determine, but in the meantime the government feels it is only fair, in view of the current circumstances of pension recipients, that an interim increase should be made at this time.

The amounts required to give effect to these increases on an annual basis are of the order of \$20,500,000 for disability pensions and \$16 million for war veterans and civilian allowances.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): We have been waiting for a long time, as a matter of fact since September, 1964, for the announcement the minister has made today, and considering the length of time which has elapsed since the hon. gentleman first promised to bring down legislation on the subject of disability pensions—it was to have been before Christmas, 1964—I say that the announced increase of 15 per cent is totally inadequate and will be rejected by the veterans of this country.

The veterans objected when an increase of only 10 per cent was granted in 1964. The soaring and uncontrolled rise in cost of living