

*The Address—Mr. Fulton*

**Hon. Hugues Lapointe (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** If I understand my hon. friend's question properly, he is referring to pensions paid to persons who are termed dependent parents under the Pension Act. As he knows, these pensions are not paid as of right but are awarded by the pension commission after investigation into the need for such a pension, and the amount is determined by the commission.

**Mr. Fleming:** Will the minister indicate whether the proposed amendments involving increases in other groups will apply to this group?

**Mr. Lapointe:** The amendments propose changes in the basic rates of pension, the amount of which is set by the act itself. The amount of the pension to be paid to the dependent parent is not determined in the act but is determined by the pension commission. However, there is a ceiling in the act.

**Mr. Fleming:** Will there be any provision for varying the present ceiling? Will there be any benefit at all to this group I have mentioned as a result of the proposed amendments?

**Mr. Lapointe:** I think my hon. friend will see what the bill contains when it is put before the house.

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

## CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed, from Wednesday, November 14, consideration of the motion of Mr. Robert Cauchon for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Drew, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Quelch.

**Mr. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops):** Mr. Speaker, as the house will appreciate, we are discussing at this stage of the throne speech debate the amendment moved by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Quelch), which brings into sharp relief the whole question of veterans affairs and the welfare particularly of two groups of veterans, the disability pensioner and the recipient of war veterans allowance. The position of the disability pensioner, which was the subject of so much discussion and agitation, has been improved as outlined in the announcement made by the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Lapointe) on Friday, which indicated that recipients of disability pensions will be granted an increase in their basic rate of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 35 per cent, taking the general average between single pensioners and married pensioners.

The house and the country of course welcome the announcement of those pension increases. Therefore I am not going to debate the question of disability pensioners as a separate issue nor am I going to debate the question of who is responsible for the results reflected in the announcement made by the minister on Friday. In my view that question does not need debate because the answer to it is self-evident. The Canadian Legion and other veterans organizations throughout the country are entirely responsible for the result announced on Friday last. A very short review of the history of this matter establishes that. The increase was requested last spring by the Legion in the veterans affairs committee. It had been requested previously in a brief submitted by the Legion last fall; but nothing was done. In fact action to increase the basic rates of pension had been consistently refused by the government until the Legion undertook, this summer, a further very strenuous and successful campaign to force the government to change its view.

It is perfectly obvious that the government yielded as a result of the mounting pressure which followed that campaign, so it was that effort on the part of the Legion and other veterans organizations which had the result announced last Friday. However, although I think it is important to keep the record quite clear in that regard, namely, that it was the result of the pressure of the veterans' organizations themselves, nevertheless that does not alter the fact that the house, the country and veterans' organizations generally welcome the action which the government has now taken with respect to disability pensioners.

But, Mr. Speaker, the recognition which has now been given to the need for an increase in the basic rate of disability pensions serves in large measure to emphasize the hardship being suffered at the present time by war veterans allowance recipients, which hardship has not been alleviated in any way by any action yet taken by the government. Indeed all we have is the promise of another committee, but not even a committee for the present session. It is to be a committee which will not commence its study until the session of 1952 and will not have the opportunity until then to recommend alleviation of the hardships being experienced by these veterans. It is about them particularly that I wish to speak today.

The hardship being suffered by war veterans allowance recipients arises from two sources. The first is the inadequacy of the level of payment, namely a maximum of \$40 a month for single men and \$70 a month