

went, was quite irresponsible. I, as the member for the riding of Bruce, care how high these figures go because I always remember that no matter how much we pay out in the form of benefits we must collect the same amount from taxpayers of this country. Consequently, what I am interested in is a fair and realistic figure for these unfortunate people who have given their all for their country.

May I remind you, Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out today by the two previous members, that the government's white paper indicated that the maximum amount of this new allowance might be \$1,200 a year. This was the original figure given to the committee. I agree that the Woods report had suggested a much higher figure but the standing committee, following its review of the white paper, suggested that this maximum be raised to \$3,500 a year. In response to the committee's recommendation, the government doubled the maximum figure published in the white paper and set it at \$2,400 in the present bill.

This new allowance should be considered in its full financial context, rather than in isolation. As has been pointed out in evidence before the standing committee, after April 1, a married pensioner with no children, who receives the maximum allowance for incapacity and the maximum attendants allowance, will receive, first, a pension of \$4,464 a year; second, an attendants allowance of \$3,000 per year; third, an exceptional incapacity allowance of \$2,400 per year, making a total of \$9,864 a year apart from clothing allowance. Since all these payments are exempt from income tax, as they certainly should be, they are the equivalent of a gross income, if taxable, under the present income tax laws, of \$13,600. These amounts will apply to all of the most severe cases. I should perhaps mention that while in theory the attendants allowance is paid in recognition of extra costs, in fact most veterans concerned are attended by members of their family, usually the wife, so that the allowance is really an added part of the family resources like the pension itself.

The pension, the attendants allowance and the exceptional incapacity allowance are all payable for life. There are also pension survivor benefits. Therefore, no provision need be made from them for superannuation or retirement income. Furthermore, apart from these various payments, if the veteran is over 65 years of age, he is entitled also to receive another \$3,600 in benefits under the Old Age Security Act. Therefore, in some cases, some veterans would receive a possible maximum income that is the equivalent of over \$16,600 a year. May I say perhaps that is not enough. However, neither is a million dollars enough. We have to draw the line somewhere. Some time we have to stop people from standing up in the House of Commons and in other legislatures in Canada and saying "give me, give me, give me" and in the next breath "cut taxes, cut taxes, cut taxes". It simply cannot be done.

● (4:10 p.m.)

**Mr. Peters:** That's not true. Talk to the minister responsible for housing. He says you can cut the amount of money and still give more.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

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### *Pension Acts*

**Mr. Whicher:** I have pointed out that no maximum figure can be pinpointed as being correct. The new maximum of \$2,400 per year represents an important extra benefit to veterans. I have no doubt it will be warmly welcomed. As a member of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, an active member for years in the Royal Canadian Legion, vice president of one branch, a former zone commander of one of the great zones in the province of Ontario—

**An hon. Member:** Do you think you are the only one?

**Mr. Whicher:** No.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Then, don't boast about it.

**Mr. Whicher:** I am not boasting about it. I give that as background information to explain why I have no hesitation in supporting the legislation as far as this point is concerned. I have no hesitation in voting against the amendment of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) because I believe the government and the minister have been as fair as possible in very difficult circumstances.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the amendment of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). The more I hear the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre speak, the more I realize what a great man he is. We call him "Mr. Parliament" and "Mr. Pension". Today, we saw him exercise prophetic powers. When the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) attempted to rise in his seat, he anticipated his question and, by his prophetic powers, he answered it. This indicates the strength, experience and compassion that the hon. member possesses.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Knowles for leader.

**Mr. Gilbert:** After listening to the remarks of the last speaker with regard to the amendment, I am more convinced that members from both sides of the House should support it.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gilbert:** The members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs have had experience in World War I, World War II and other theatres. When I think of the wide knowledge that they possess, the letters and requests they receive from veterans and the attention they give to them, I am fully convinced that they are experts in this field. I am a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. I thought we possessed a certain specialized knowledge and nonpartisanship. After hearing the speeches that were made today, I am fully convinced that the members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs far exceed the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, perhaps not from the standpoint of quality and calibre, but certainly in terms of experience and