

monly referred to as the Veterans' Charter. Any regulations, in our opinion, which may have been made to cover this deduction have in fact no authority in the Act and the money deducted from the veterans mentioned has been wrongfully charged.

*Conclusion:*

We deeply appreciate the consideration being given by veteran members of the House of Commons to veteran provisions intended to meet the needs and relieve problems of ex-servicemen whose disabilities are directly due to or in some degree related to war service. We are grateful to the Minister and the Department of Veterans Affairs, including treatment administration to which they have exercised a humanitarian attitude in the administration of provisions enacted. We wish to assure you that from our intimate associations with the many ex-servicemen who have problems, we are anxious to co-operate with you and the department in developing a thorough appreciation of the problems involved and in making recommendations where we think improvement could be effected advantageously.

We appreciate your considerate attention.

The WITNESS: With your leave, Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a few remarks, now that the brief has been read. Firstly, I think that we should realize, gentlemen, the fact that the administration of the War Veterans Allowances Act, more particularly in recent years, has changed to such an extent that we now have to regard it as a war disability pension. We have to recognize the fact that, in granting these allowances and in administering the Act, the underlying principle which has been conceded in order to approach the question has been the fact that these unfortunate men, who through war service are no longer able to maintain themselves, have suffered some unidentifiable disability due to that war service.

I think that position is unassailable and from that position certain conclusions must be properly drawn, the first of which is that undoubtedly such men are entitled to receive the most kindly and benevolent consideration of their problems and be given, as they have the right to be given, sufficient income to maintain themselves in accordance with the standards of decency and respect which were theirs when they were fighting for us. That is the burden of our brief and of our presentation here today, and from that position will stem several matters which I wish to mention to you. But before going into these matters I want to make these observations.

Unless I am mistaken in my recollection of budgetary figures, our annual budget for defence purposes runs into billions of dollars. I notice that when our friendly competitor and collaborator the Canadian Legion made its presentation, some information was asked from them as to what they felt the recommendations they made would cost. Frankly, it is useless asking me any such questions because I do not believe in guessing at things and any attempt of mine to answer such questions would be unsuccessful for the simple reason that I have not got this information, nor have I any means of getting it, or obtaining access to information upon which I could base my replies. But I do make this submission: that no matter what it would cost, within the bounds of reason, we could not say to our veterans: "We know how to fight for our freedom and privileges, but having fought for them, we are going to count our pennies to find out whether you can share in the benefits for which you made the sacrifices." And if we are going to count the cost too seriously we are bound to accept ourselves as being in that position, and I do not think there is a man in this room, or a man or woman in Canada, who would support such an attitude. Therefore I feel that while it is the responsibility of the government of the day and the House of Commons on all sides to consider the burden