

*Oral Questions*

and Employment Program which is the one mentioned by the Hon. Member. There are in addition to the employment which will be provided through several projects which will be announced later by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of State (Economic Development), as moneys are made available.

## LAYING OFF OF TERM EMPLOYEES

**Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria):** During the Minister's boasting yesterday he said that the forces would be hiring 15,000 to 16,000 people in a variety of jobs. At the same time the Department is laying off hundreds of term employees. Can the Minister deny that these recently laid-off term employees will be drawing unemployment insurance while their jobs will be taken by the new short-term employees, the whole exercise representing a gigantic scam on the unemployment insurance fund?

**Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence):** Madam Speaker, I have to deny very strongly the connection that the Hon. Member suggests between the employees that we have hired through the NEED program and the term employees referred to. The Hon. Member should know that every year on March 31 we have to end the contracts of some of our employees who are in fact term employees. That is normal practice and this does not affect any other employees who might be hired through the NEED program. I have the figures here, Madam Speaker. In March we had 4,232 term employees. The employees hired by the NEED program will be over and above the normal term employees that we have.

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## VETERANS AFFAIRS

## NOTIFICATION OF BENEFITS FOR WIDOWS

**Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Madam Speaker, I am grateful to you for permitting me to put a question or two this afternoon to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. I suppose one could say that the discussion on the budget this week has not included very many references to veterans and their problems.

I welcome this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Veterans Affairs for some of the things he has done since he took on that job.

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

**Mr. Knowles:** I am happy to say that in the past ten or 12 years we have made considerable improvements in legislation with respect to veterans and others, but this is a problem on which we must continue to work.

A few days ago the Minister of National Health and Welfare sent to all pensioners a printed document signed both by herself and by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, telling the pensioners that there are many people who, in the last two or three years, have not received their benefits, and if they would

send their notices they might be able to get some of the benefits that are now available to them.

We regard it as very important to extend this effort, although we are glad about what has been done. I hope the Minister of Veterans Affairs will be able to indicate that he and others are prepared to do further things by newspapers, radio broadcasts and all the rest, to advise the thousands of widows, widowers, and dependent children of the things that are coming to them under veterans legislation.

**Hon. W. Bennett Campbell (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Madam Speaker, may I thank the Hon. Member for his question and preface my comments by saying, on behalf of all Members, how pleased we are to see the tremendous recovery in health of the Hon. Member and his active participation in the proceedings of the House.

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

**Mr. Campbell (Cardigan):** The particular item to which the Hon. Member refers is the cheque stuffer which the Minister of National Health and Welfare agreed to include with the March cheques for Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement. This is a further attempt to contact widows who are entitled to receive proportionate pensions as a result of amendments to the Pension Act.

When the legislation was passed we anticipated that some 23,000 widows would become eligible for pension benefits. To date we have received and processed in excess of 17,000 applications. We have used every avenue available to us, through the *Legion Magazine*, veterans' publications, periodicals and the assistance of Members of Parliament. I can only suggest that if Hon. Members know of anyone who is a widow who may be entitled to benefits under the Proportionate Pension Program they urge that person to get in touch with the Department.

## AGING VETERANS PROGRAM

**Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Minister if he is aware of the fact that in many sections these days there are efforts to do something to improve the position of aging veterans by establishing a program. This is very important to those concerned—the older people, the younger people, veterans' organizations, and Members of Parliament.

May I ask the Minister if he is making other efforts to improve on what has been done and to improve the position for all aging veterans?

**Hon. W. Bennett Campbell (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Madam Speaker, about 2 years ago we introduced the Aging Veterans Program which was deliberately geared to provide the necessary support services to enable veterans to continue living in their own homes and own communities as long as possible. This Program has gone through the pilot stages and it was provided to approximately 200 veterans who are disability