

Procedure Committee Report

other side of the house in connection with this viewpoint.

The committee on veterans affairs was established on October 4, 1945 at the request of veterans organizations across Canada, and at the request of a number of other groups which were very concerned at that time with the return of our veterans to civil life. As a matter of fact, the work of this committee affects the rights of over a million veterans who saw service, and indirectly affects the rights of some four million veterans and their dependants in this country. So it is quite safe to say that the work of this committee since its inception—and I was a member of the original committee—has been followed with great interest by veterans organizations and all persons concerned with their welfare.

This committee has performed a tremendous service to veterans and their dependants throughout the years, and I am sure that members of all parties will agree with that. It has established the legislation which we now call the veterans charter. It has heard representations throughout the years from veterans organizations and widows organizations and other groups. Third, it has made representations to the house as to improvements required in legislation and proposed amendments to legislation. Fourth, I think the experience of the department and of the committee itself has been of great value because the department has pioneered many fields of health services. It has pioneered in research into matters concerned with the health and institutional care of veterans; it has done a lot of work in connection with prosthetic services which are now being recognized by other parts of the profession in Canada, and it has pioneered a great deal in pension administration and the administration of the law. As a matter of fact a good number of workmen's compensation acts passed by provincial—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I may not be quite following the hon. member but I understood we were discussing the fifteenth report of the special committee on procedure and organization. I fail to see just under what heading this detailed explanation of the committee on veterans affairs falls. I am wondering whether the hon. member will keep his remarks relevant to the report which we are now discussing.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to you, I am strictly in order.

20220—794½

The summary of the recommendations of this report includes the recommendation that a standing committee on health, welfare and veterans affairs be established. This would mean that the standing committee on veterans affairs would be disbanded. I think I am strictly in order when dealing with the value of the work done by that committee, and in dealing with the suggestion that it be included in a committee which would deal with matters of health and welfare as well as veterans affairs.

The committee on veterans affairs has done a great deal of work in respect of the administration of pension legislation, and just prior to your interruption, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the point that many of the compensation acts passed by provincial legislatures were based on the experience gained by the Canadian pension commission, which has been brought before this committee year after year. The committee has done very valuable work in that respect.

This committee has also dealt with Veterans Land Act administration and it has been realized throughout the years that this administration has done a lot of pioneering and counselling in respect of farm credit. This work led eventually to various farm credit loans legislation. It has pioneered in connection with insurance for individuals who obtained credit under the Veterans Land Act administration.

Veterans organizations across this country have recognized the value of the work done by this committee and have urged that it be maintained. In that connection I should like to read a copy of a letter dated March 1, 1965 addressed to the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson). I am confident that the Prime Minister will give sympathetic consideration to the suggestions set out in this letter, which was written by F. T. O'Brecht. This letter reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It is reported in *Votes and Proceedings*, No. 210, of 14th December, 1964, that the special committee on procedure and organizations recommended that a standing committee on health, welfare and veterans affairs be appointed. Such committee would deal with various aspects of the department of health and welfare and: veterans affairs; Canadian pension commission; war veterans allowance board; pensions in respect of members of the armed forces and their dependants, etc.

The Royal Canadian Legion is opposed to this recommendation. Benefits provided veterans and their dependants through pertinent legislation have always been distinct from general welfare measures in our country. These benefits are related primarily to a veteran's service to his country in time of war and they are in a class by themselves.