

Mr. HERRIDGE: You had better not.

Mr. PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be as well if the minister was seated.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. TEILLET: Gentlemen, I am not going to make a very long speech to you this morning. I know this always has been the case. I have a cabinet meeting at 10 o'clock this morning but I do not mind being a little late for it.

First of all, may I say how much I welcome this opportunity of meeting with you this morning and telling you to what extent this standing committee of veterans affairs has been helpful and of value to the department. These meetings are of great value to the department because of their interest and the attitude taken in dealing with veterans affairs. I think I said last year, when we first met—and I had taken this from the text of an introductory speech of a previous minister of another government and another party—that this is one committee where you have managed to do your work with a minimum of political—in other words, partisan—consideration. Your interest has been the welfare of the veterans of Canada, and I certainly want to compliment this committee on their attitude during the past year. I am sure you will carry on in that spirit.

I understand you will be considering the estimates and, of course, during this consideration, as usual, I am sure that you will find the officers of the department most co-operative. They will give you every assistance they can. While I will not perhaps be spending too much time with you I want to assure you at this time that any time my presence might be helpful and you require it I will be only too glad to attend.

Perhaps I should report to you that our work in preparing legislation for this session is nearing completion and we will be introducing legislation in the house in the very near future, certainly well before the end of this year. This legislation will cover a large number of items. It may not cover all of the items that we would like to see introduced at this time and, perhaps, certain legislation which others would like to see will not be introduced. But, we have spent a great deal of time with the officials of the department looking through the representations of the various veterans organizations throughout Canada, the resolutions at their annual meeting, the annual meeting of the Royal Canadian Legion, your own recommendations and, as well, I am sure, the recommendations that I and the officials have received from various members of parliament and interested individuals across the country. We have tried to do as good a job as we could on that and we hope to be able to present it to the house in the not too distant future.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know what more I can add this morning that would be useful to the committee. Perhaps I should conclude by presenting to you the officials of the department and the Canadian Pension Commission who are here this morning to await your deliberations. I would start with the deputy minister, Mr. Paul Pelletier, whom I am sure you have met before, and the assistant deputy minister, Mr. Mace. Then we have the assistant deputy minister in charge of treatment services, Dr. Crawford; Mr. Taylor, director, legal services; Mr. Reynolds, chief pensions advocate; Mr. Walsh, director, finance, purchasing and stores; Mr. Rider, director, veterans welfare services; Mr. Strojich, senior administrative officer, veterans land administration; Mr. Pawley is not here this morning as he is attending a meeting of the directors across the country in Montreal; Mr. Black, departmental secretary. Then, from the Canadian Pension Commission we have Mr. Anderson, the chairman, and Mr. Mutch, the deputy chairman. From the war veterans allowance board we have Mr. Cromb, the chairman, and Mr. Cross, the deputy chairman. Mr. Mann, chief rehabilitation, veterans welfare services is present as well as Mr. Tubb, chief social welfare services.