

*The Address—Mr. Harkness*

it should have been done. What they have announced is that a committee will be set up at the next session to study the matter. One thing I think the committee and the government should have very much in mind is that whatever increase is granted to war veterans allowance recipients should be made retroactive at least to the present time, and in any event to the same time the increase in disability pensions becomes effective.

One of the difficult matters with regard to war veterans allowance is that the amount of income permitted to be earned or secured in any other way is not nearly sufficient. The total amount of income allowed a recipient of the war veterans allowance should, without doubt, be raised. Many of these men who find a small job earn more than the allowable amount of extra income. In many cases they do not realize that is so until it is too late; and when the officials of the war veterans allowance board discover this situation they cut off a portion of the war veterans allowance until this extra amount is paid back. When that happens these people get into truly difficult circumstances and find it almost impossible to live. This could be overcome by increasing the total amount of allowable income for the recipients of war veterans allowance. At the moment the ceiling on total income for a single man on war veterans allowance is \$610 a year, and for a married man \$1,100 a year. In the case of a single man this means that the amount he can earn above the allowance is \$125, and in the case of a married man it is \$250.

So far as disability pensions are concerned this matter is going to assume even greater importance with the increase in the basic rate of pension. Many drawing small disability pensions are drawing war veterans allowance also. What is going to happen in their case? Unless this allowable limit is raised the increase they receive under their disability pension is going to be deducted from their war veterans allowance cheque, and they are not going to be one cent further ahead. I believe that is something which should be corrected immediately. We still have plenty of time for the government to bring in some provision at this session to make certain that situation will not come to pass.

For several years I have advocated that the total allowable income for the recipients of war veterans allowance should be increased. I feel it should be increased to the level of the income tax exemption. In other words, before the allowance is cut down the single man should have a total income of \$1,000, and the married man a total income of \$2,000. If he is able, in spite of his disability, to do odd jobs and pick up a few hundred dollars

[Mr. Harkness.]

I believe he should be allowed to retain it, particularly in view of the cost of living today. A move such as I have suggested, to raise the total allowable income, would help a great deal to do away with the many complaints every one of us receives from the war veterans allowance recipients. This matter has been dealt with by a large number of speakers, so I do not propose to spend any more time upon it.

There is one other subject I should like to mention, and that is the feed grain and forage situation in western Canada, and in particular in my own province of Alberta where I am familiar with conditions. In Alberta this year more areas were wiped out by hail than in any other year in history. Following that the early onset of winter prevented the grain in many areas from being harvested. The result is that in Alberta there are a considerable number of areas in which either hail or the early onset of winter or a combination of both have prevented any harvesting at all, or perhaps only 5 or 10 per cent. This means that feed grain is now in exceptionally short supply in many portions of southern Alberta. I was in Alberta last week and found that all the elevators in my immediate area south of Calgary had been cleaned out some time ago. There was no feed grain, oats, wheat or barley. People were sending trucks as far north as Edmonton, two hundred miles away, to try to pick up a load of oats or barley so that they could feed their cattle.

The result of this shortage of feed grain in these areas is that a considerable number of people have had to dispose of their stock. I cite my own case as an example because I know it best. I had to reduce my herd of breeding sows by one-half only last week, although in the course of two or three months most of them would have produced young pigs. They had to be taken to market because I could not get sufficient feed to keep them going. This shortage of feed grain is going to result in a serious loss in future production. So far as I can determine the government, through the wheat board, have taken no steps to meet this situation. I believe they should have done so some time ago, but certainly they could arrange now that carloads of feed grain be taken from the areas where those grains exist and shipped into areas where no grain is available. Unless that is done as soon as possible, the sale of breeding stock which is necessary for future production is going to have to continue, and some people are going to have to go out of the livestock business altogether.

There is a somewhat similar situation prevailing so far as forage is concerned, hay and straw. It is very short in some areas. In this