

Supply—Veterans Affairs

from this fund. But take the case of a small pensioner, if he gets \$10 extra in addition to his pension, he can get no help whatever from the fund. The way the regulation is worded now, it does not work out fairly, and I think there should be a change in the wording of the regulation, instead of basing it on the fact the man draws a total of \$40.41 war veterans allowance. Some other line should be drawn.

Mr. Gregg: I shall be glad to make a careful study of that, Mr. Chairman, and have it reviewed by the counsel within the department who has given a lot of thought to this matter of the assistance fund.

Mr. Knowles: I heard the minister give a figure as to the percentage of recipients of war veterans allowance in one province who had their allowance supplemented by \$50. During the discussion has he given those percentages for the other provinces, and if not, could he do so now?

Mr. Gregg: I have that in my office, but not here. I remember British Columbia figures particularly because I have been told so often in this house that the war veterans allowance is so much lower in British Columbia than the old age pension.

Mr. Green: So it is.

Mr. Gregg: Let me reply to that by stating that 76 per cent of the applicants in British Columbia for war veterans allowance assistance have been granted assistance for which they applied. Of the recipients of old age pensions in British Columbia, 74.2 per cent are receiving the extra \$10 per month if they have lived in British Columbia three years, and it is looked upon as a cost of living bonus.

Mr. Harkness: That causes me to ask a question. So far as Calgary was concerned, the figure given by the minister worked out to about \$40 per year, and that was given to 319 people who applied for assistance under this particular provision. He says now that in British Columbia 75 per cent of the people on war veterans allowance have been brought up to the scale of the old age pension. The scale for the old age pension in Alberta is higher than in British Columbia at the present time; it is the highest in Canada. Apparently the war veterans in Alberta have only had an average of \$40 per year increase, so they have not been brought up to anything like the scale of the old age pension.

Mr. Gregg: I did not state that 70 per cent of the applicants for war veterans allowance had been brought up to \$50. I said that their

cases had been cared for. I would also indicate that even at the average of the amount shown for Calgary, it has been rather surprising to see the degree of hardship that could be overcome by spot amounts of \$25, \$30, \$40, or \$50. It has helped in a great many cases.

Mr. Harkness: But my point still remains. How is it that 75 per cent of the people in Alberta have not been brought up to the scale of the old age pensions if they have in British Columbia?

Mr. Gregg: I did not suggest that, Mr. Chairman. I could also ask the question, if I wanted to do so, why a larger per capita amount had not been spent in the province of New Brunswick, or on behalf of my friends in Newfoundland. We are more economical down there.

Mr. Knowles: May I ask the minister about the supplementary amount that has been paid in British Columbia. He says that 75 per cent of the recipients of the war veterans allowance assistance have received spot payments of \$40 or \$50 to tide them over. Were those \$40 to \$50 payments a temporary arrangement or a more or less permanent thing?

Mr. Gregg: Some of those will be payments of \$10 per month to single men or \$15 per month to a man and his wife, while others will be spot payments, and others will be small amounts of money to help the veteran overcome a difficulty. I did not at all attempt to indicate, and if I did I take it back, that they were all in any sense regular amounts paid for the twelve months of the year.

Mr. McCusker: I should like to ask the minister if there is a greater proportion of veterans in British Columbia asking for assistance than in the other provinces. It seems to me the grants there are considerably heavier.

Mr. Gregg: I would not say that they are, Mr. Chairman. I would say, however, that there is a much larger proportion of veterans in British Columbia, both old and young, in comparison with the rest of the population, than in any other part of Canada. That is because of the climate.

Mr. McCusker: I am not doubting what the minister said, and I do not want to seem to be doing so. I think the minister said that 2,400 applied for assistance in British Columbia compared with about 400 in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Gregg: Who had been accepted.

Mr. McCusker: Who had been accepted.

Mr. Gregg: 2,751 in Vancouver.