

*War Veterans' Allowance Act*

of the training camps on Salisbury Plain, conditions that were not encountered in the well-housed training areas of world war II.

The bill extends eligibility for war veterans allowance from a service point of view to those who served in the United Kingdom during world war I for at least 365 days prior to the date following the armistice. This minimum period of 365 days conforms with the more recent recommendations of the Canadian Legion, and is considered by the government to be a fair basis upon which to establish eligibility.

The entire bill, except the portion dealing with salaries, is intended to come into effect on the first day of November, 1957. It will be noted that this date is also the effective date of the bill which amends the Old Age Security Act.

The main reason for selecting November 1 as the effective date of the war veterans allowance measure is to bring into effect, as soon as possible, the higher income ceilings and the other improvements that the bill covers. Another important reason for choosing the same effective date as that fixed for the old age security increase is to ensure that the higher income ceilings permit the war veterans allowance recipient who has reached the age of 70 to obtain maximum benefit from the increase of old age security pension.

I think I should take this opportunity to mention that some delay in processing all the accounts at the new war veterans allowance rate and ceiling will inevitably occur. Old age security pensions require no complicated computation such as results from the income ceiling of the war veterans allowance. The cheques for old age assistance benefits can therefore be written at short notice, whereas the war veterans allowance accounts must be scrutinized individually.

As some hon. members are aware, the income ceiling is attached to a continuous period of twelve months, known in my department as the VA year. This VA year commences to run from the date of the award of war veterans allowance or from the date of reinstatement of war veterans allowance following a period of cancellation. The VA year may therefore commence from any date in the calendar year, and hon. members will appreciate how complicated the computation of adjustments can be. The process is necessarily time-consuming, and to avoid anxiety among recipients who might think that they have been overlooked, I should like to make it as widely known as possible that every case will not be adjusted to the new rate during the month of November. However, the officials of my department

are giving priority to the task of reviewing these files, and we hope that all adjustments will have been made within the next month or so.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that these remarks will have been of assistance to hon. members in clarifying the intent of this measure. I may say I shall be prepared to give further detailed information when we come to discuss the different clauses in the bill.

**Mr. W. A. Tucker (Rosithern):** Mr. Speaker, I should like first of all to commend the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Brooks) on the very clear statement he has just given regarding the intention of the bill which is now before us.

I think I should observe at the outset that most hon. members who have had anything to do with veterans legislation will realize that this bill is of the same nature as those which have constantly been coming before parliament with regard to veterans affairs. As each step forward has been taken it has been found that further steps need to be taken in order to meet difficulties which arise or to iron out inconsistencies or inequities. Then, again, as the cost of living has risen it has been necessary to increase the amounts payable under this legislation. There has also been a feeling on the part of the people of Canada that assistance given to ex-service men should at the very least not lag behind that granted under the ordinary social welfare measures.

It was naturally to be expected that further steps would be taken with regard to war veterans allowances and pensions legislation in the light of the measures adopted by parliament in regard to old age security, old age assistance and the other matters with which we have already dealt.

I should say in this regard that many people think—I am inclined to agree with them—that where men have given service to their country at risk to themselves, as is the case with ex-service men, they should receive some extra consideration from the federal government, especially if they suffered in any way as a result of that service in respect of their ability to work or with respect to their position in life. This view was, of course, taken by the minister and by those associated with him when he was in opposition.

It is in the light of that attitude that I now propose to go over the bill which he has introduced today and make a few remarks in regard to it. As a member of the party whose government brought the veterans charter into existence and improved it on a number of occasions I naturally welcome this further improvement and I think all members