

Supply—Veterans Affairs

the reputation of having an understanding and sympathetic heart in respect of all veterans problems. So we extend to him our best wishes for an interesting and enjoyable life in retirement.

Mr. Blackmore: Just before we leave this matter, I should like to put on record—

Mr. Gregg: Before the hon. member continues, would he permit me to express my appreciation of this very happy interlude. There is one satisfying feature, and it is that these kindly words will be preserved and will appear on *Hansard*. One can almost regret that it is not possible for the deputy minister to respond directly to the high tributes which have been paid to him this afternoon by hon. members from all corners of the house. I should think that such a series of generous and well earned eulogies constitutes an almost unique occasion in this chamber. However, it is completely in order that this should have been done, because every phase of the work coming under the Department of Veterans Affairs has been immeasurably enriched by the patient guidance and clear vision of the distinguished recipient of the kind words expressed this afternoon.

As the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra has said, Canadians owe a great deal to Walter Woods—and when I say “Canadians” I refer to both veterans and non-veterans. Both generations of veterans have an intimate knowledge of his work, and I am sure no words of mine could add to the expressions of appreciation received from one end of this country to the other.

When the veterans returned after the last war, and even before that time when the veterans’ charter was under consideration, Walter Woods acted as a focus behind all those activities. He was most active in the evolution of that veterans’ charter. To its preparation he gave much of his experience, and to a high degree its success was due to his realistic and friendly outlook on life.

At the time of demobilization there came into being throughout the whole of Canada a marked receptive atmosphere which played a paramount part in the whole job of rehabilitation. That receptive, friendly and welcoming atmosphere has continued from 1945 to the present. Many factors entered into it, one of the most important of which was the setting up of citizens rehabilitation committees in our cities. The establishment of those committees did not just happen; they were evoked by the enthusiasm and hard work of the deputy minister.

And so this afternoon I should like to add my simple tribute to those which have already been made to a friend and a great public servant.

[Mr. Quelch.]

Mr. Blackmore: Far be it from me to strike a discordant note concerning the work of a great man in the veterans’ service. I believe he is entitled to those expressions, and I rejoice in the fact that these things have been said. I concur in what was said by the hon. member for Acadia, who spoke for every member of this group.

But, Mr. Chairman, let us bear this in mind, that when an inspector goes out to assess the strength of a chain he does not inspect the strongest link; he seeks out the weakest. It is my business, as a sort of inspector, representing my constituency, to seek out the weak links in what we are doing. Thus it is that we shall pave the way for that evolution to which the minister referred, so that by and by we shall have a set-up in Canada in which we may have complete confidence.

I wish to place only two things on *Hansard*, so that hon. members may know that there has been a good deal of smoke screening resorted to this afternoon by those various members who have tried to brush off what I have said. People will understand that behind these smoke screens there are some grim realities. First of all the minister endeavoured to establish the idea that the commission was not appointed to act as a formal commission. So that the facts may stand right out, and so that we may know just how serious that commission was, and how much this country has a right to expect from it, I should like to quote briefly. First of all, the commission was appointed under the provisions of part I of the Inquiries Act by order in council P.C. 4980 of December 4, 1947, as amended by order in council P.C. 75 of January 8, 1948.

Commissions appointed under that paragraph are not secondary commissions. They stand in a class with the best commissions ever appointed by the House of Commons, and the house has a right to exact just as complete a service and just as clear a report from them as from any commission ever set up in Canada. May I now read the powers the commission had, and in doing so I shall turn first to the Inquiries Act, chapter 99 of the revised statutes of Canada, an act respecting public and departmental inquiries. Part I reads as follows:

1. This act may be cited as the Inquiries Act.
2. The governor in council may, whenever he deems it expedient, cause inquiry to be made into and concerning any matter connected with the good government of Canada or the conduct of any part of the public business thereof.
3. In case such inquiry is not regulated by any special law, the governor in council may, by a commission in the case, appoint persons as commissioners by whom the inquiry shall be conducted.
4. The commissioners shall have the power of summoning before them any witnesses, and of requiring them to give evidence on oath, or on solemn affirmation if they are persons entitled to