

The Address—Mr. Herridge

are suffering gross injustice. Thousands of these men, their wives, and in some cases their dependents, are vitally concerned at this time about the cost of living, the cost of bread and butter, milk, meat, clothes, fuel and all those things that are so necessary for the maintenance of life.

I said in commencing that I was not going to speak at length or repeat the arguments so excellently made by the preceding speakers, but I want to read two short paragraphs from two organs representing the two great veterans groups in this country. First of all I wish to refer to the November, 1951, issue of *The Legionary*. In an editorial on this question it has this to say:

It is regrettable that the government did not see fit to have a parliamentary committee set up to deal with war veterans allowance during the current fall session so that the increase, whatever it may be, could have helped to tide the recipients over the coming winter months when expenses are heaviest. The government having announced its decision, however, *The Legionary* can only express the fervent hope which it feels sure all ex-servicemen and women will share, that when the amount of the increase is determined, it will be sufficient to enable these gallant old defenders of Canada's freedom to spend their remaining years in reasonable comfort, free from the fear of want or outright poverty. Nothing less than that will satisfy their younger or more fortunately placed comrades—nor, we firmly believe, the citizens of this country generally.

We completely agree with the sentiments expressed in that editorial, but we also believe that now is the time for the government to consider the position of our less fortunately placed comrades. I should also like to read one paragraph from the *Veterans Advocate* of June 1, 1951. This paper is the official organ of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans Association. In dealing with this question it has this to say:

We don't know how good our own advice is. But we are offering some to the Canadian government. This is it: Please remember that veterans are not a political bloc. They do not wish to become one. They have able spokesmen, men like Baker, Watts, Wickens, Lumsden, Lambert—to name a few. But these men are Canadians, first, last and all the time. They don't want to lead pressure groups or lobbyists to Ottawa. But you are going to force veterans into a pressure group unless you relieve some of that pressure and give the veteran a little of the justice he believes in and fought for. It is still not too late.

That paragraph of the editorial is very well phrased. Veterans organizations are not pressure groups in the accepted meaning of the words. Pressure groups are groups that always imply some political punishment if members of parliament or political parties do not take certain action in their favour. The veterans of this country, as represented by the two major groups, have placed their requests fairly before the cabinet, the veterans affairs committee and the country as

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a whole. Because of their responsible and fair representations, because of the need that exists at this time, we wholeheartedly support the amendment to the amendment. I am quite sure, as the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra said, there is not a single member in this house who dares to rise and say that these veterans do not require an increase in the rate of war veterans allowance and are not entitled to a raise in the ceiling for earnings, as suggested by the hon. member who preceded me.

Mr. Knowles: At this session too.

Mr. Herridge: I have been ardently supporting the amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Acadia. I regret I find that duty requires me to bring to the attention of the house some of the remarks of his leader on a certain occasion and to do my best to correct the false impression he may have created. I am speaking of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low).

Mr. Johnston: Don't spoil a good speech.

Mr. Herridge: I want to refer to page 55 of *Hansard*. At that time the hon. member was speaking in this debate. The hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) interrupted and said:

What about peaches in the Peace river district?

Then the hon. member for Peace River replied:

By George, I am going to tell you something about that. The British Columbia Fruit Growers Association attempted to take me to task because I had decried the stupidity of people who would allow peaches to go to waste, tons and tons of them, at a time when the people on the prairies were not able to get them. They wired me to the effect that they had incontrovertible evidence to show that 30,000 packages of fruit had been distributed in my constituency, the Peace river, of which 10,000 were peaches. I have determined that a package of peaches is a crate containing approximately three dozen.

I am glad the hon. member at least found that out.

There are 17,000 families in the Peace river country and the Fruit Growers Association of British Columbia were sufficiently interested to see that each family in the Peace river country got about 24 or 25 peaches. Does that sound like decent distribution? At the same time I saw with my own eyes perfectly good fruit going to waste at Summerland and in various parts of the Okanagan.

Now, in addition to that I saw a dispatch from the *Vancouver Daily Province* which reads as follows:

Kelowna—B.C. Fruit Growers' Association has demanded that Solon Low, federal leader of the Social Credit party, either substantiate or withdraw statements to the effect that B.C. fruit is unavailable to consumers on the prairies and that peaches were unobtainable in the Peace river country.