

War Veterans' Allowance Act

a few moments ago. That is the latest instructions which have been issued to the district authorities.

Mr. Irwin: That still does not cover the point. When a man has a house whose fair market value is \$12,000 and that house is assessed by the municipality at 75 per cent, that is \$9,000. Suppose that man has an equity in that house of \$10,000; according to the regulations the minister read out they have to take (a) the assessed value or (b) the equity in the house, or whichever is the higher. You have to take the \$10,000 according to what the minister said, and I am sure that is not the intention. Is that the intention? Will the minister give us his assurance that the regulation will be altered so the man will be taxed for the assessed value and not the full equity?

Mr. Brooks: If the equity were \$10,000, then \$8,000 would be exempt and there would be \$2,000 on which 5 per cent would be charged.

Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West): Mr. Chairman, may I ask the minister a question. In arriving at the valuation are municipal assessments taken into consideration?

Mr. Brooks: Yes, the municipal assessments are taken into consideration; they are used as a basis. I might say that under the War Veterans' Allowance Act there are very few recipients with houses of \$12,000 value and very few who have an equity of \$10,000.

Mr. Irwin: Mr. Chairman, it is obvious that the minister does not live in White Rock.

Mr. Brooks: I hope to some day.

Mr. Hahn: Mr. Chairman, as I understand it the minister explained that the department uses municipal assessments to determine the value.

Mr. Brooks: Yes, that is right.

Mr. Hahn: Since there is such a wide degree of variation in the assessment of the various municipalities, I would suggest that the department take under advisement having its own assessors establish the value in comparison with other veterans homes on the basis of districts.

Mr. Brooks: I might say my information is that the department finds it much better for the veteran if the municipal assessment is taken. I know from my own experience that municipal assessments are always far below the actual value of the property. Under this system it has been the experience of the department that it is advantageous for the veteran.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

[Mr. Brooks.]

On clause 5—*Absence from Canada.*

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, while I am pleased to see this improvement in this clause that permits six months absence from Canada, I would like to ask the minister if he would give consideration to the matter I brought before the house during the resolution stage and on second reading this afternoon, that is to permitting the veteran to leave Canada and continue to draw his war veterans allowance providing he has a medical certificate from an officer of the department indicating that it was necessary for his health.

Mr. Brooks: I assure the hon. member we will take it into consideration.

Mr. Tucker: Mr. Chairman, this matter has been under consideration for some time.

Mr. Brooks: A good many years.

Mr. Tucker: I for one certainly never thought for a moment that this matter in which my hon. friends opposite placed such store and about which they appeared to feel so strongly would have been neglected. I would have thought they would seize the first opportunity to provide for it because I well remember hon. members opposite when in opposition pointing out to the government of the day that the cost would not be very great because it would be a matter of health not affecting very many veterans. They went on to point out how fair it would be and that it was a proposal to help sick veterans to whom we have some obligation and therefore we should not allow a small amount of money to stand in the way of our doing justice. I cannot understand why the minister does not have in his files a thorough study as to what such a provision would cost. I am inclined to think he probably has had a study made of this question and I would like to ask if that is not the case.

Mr. Brooks: The hon. member seems to be drawing on his imagination in this regard as he has done with regard to a number of other matters.

Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf): Oh no.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that I think the hon. gentleman is three years late in singing this tune. He has changed his tune.

Mr. Tucker: Mr. Chairman, I cannot understand the attitude of the opposition party because here we have a statement—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Tucker: I should have said I cannot understand the attitude of the C.C.F. party and I apologize profoundly to hon. gentlemen