

Pension Act

that item 650 in the supplementary estimates carry and be reported. As an amendment I moved:

That item 650 do not now carry but that this committee request the house that it be given instructions to consider the basic rates of pensions and the War Veterans Allowance Act and make recommendations in reference thereto.

If that amendment had been accepted in the veterans committee last May there would have been ample time to have brought forward the legislation now being presented to the house, and the pensioners would not have had to wait this length of time to receive their just dues.

I might explain that when the amendment was put, twelve voted in favour of it and eighteen against. Every member of the opposition parties on the committee, together with the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank), supported the amendment, and every government member, with one exception, voted against it. It does seem a bit inconsistent when we see those very men, who had the opportunity at that time to correct what I say was a great wrong, applauding the legislation placed before the house a few days ago. Last May they could have given the veterans what they asked for and what they were entitled to.

When the bill is before the house, and we have an opportunity to discuss it, I shall have something further to say. There is however one further point I should like to make, which flows from the fact that, as I said a moment ago, we have waited too long for this legislation. In a statement the other day the minister said that the increase in pensions would become effective on January 1. As we have pointed out, January 1 will be just about the middle of our winter. Veterans already have had to provide themselves with fuel, clothing and other necessities in preparation for winter. I hope that when this legislation is brought down the increase will be made retroactive so that these men may be better able to pay their bills and meet the rigours of the winter.

Another situation concerns the small pensioner. As has been mentioned in this house on different occasions, the small pensioner who because of ill health or other reasons is not able to supplement his income is awarded a war veterans allowance. We all know that there is a ceiling on the war veterans allowance of \$610 for the single pensioner.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Does this bill refer to war veterans allowances?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Brooks: No, Mr. Speaker, it refers to pensions; but my point is that the pensioner

who is in receipt of a war veterans allowance will be handicapped. I do not know how we can discuss it at this time but I do submit that the increase given to a man in receipt of a war veterans allowance should not reduce the amount of that allowance because of the ceiling at present on the earnings of a recipient of war veterans allowance.

Mr. Lapointe: On a point of order, I have no objection to the hon. member expressing his views, but I submit he should keep within the rules of the house. Any reference to war veterans allowances on a resolution having to do with the Pension Act is completely out of order. The matter the hon. member is trying to discuss comes under the War Veterans Allowance Act and has nothing to do with this legislation.

Mr. Green: On the point of order which has been raised by the minister, I would point out that we are discussing a resolution in these terms:

That it is expedient to bring in a measure to amend the Pension Act to provide for increases in the rates of pension for disability and for death under the act.

Surely we are in order in suggesting that the bill should contain a provision that any increase in pension shall not have the result of cutting down the war veterans allowance. I submit that we are perfectly in order in asking that there should be a section in the bill to that effect. If we are to be prevented from making any suggestions of that kind we will not be able to deal fully with the pension question. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to bring in an amendment to a resolution, as Your Honour has ruled earlier in the session, but I submit that we certainly are in order when we suggest that there should be a section in this amendment to the Pension Act providing that any increase in a veteran's pension shall not have the result of reducing his war veterans allowance.

Mr. Knowles: May I say a word on the point of order. I feel that the position taken by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green) is the correct position. I realize that it is a difficult point on which Your Honour will have to rule because on the face of it the point raised by the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Lapointe) looks like one that will have to be considered. The minister suggests that when debating the Pension Act we should not discuss the War Veterans Allowance Act. Even though I might want to do so, I agree that that would be out of order at this time.

However, we now have before the house legislation that proposes to increase the amount of the disability pension that certain