

will prove most fruitful and beneficial to every class of our population and to a united Canada as a whole.

I have great confidence that the government will neglect no way of realizing to the fullest possible extent the hopes which the entire population draws from that item in the speech from the throne.

I consider as an additional token of the serious intentions of the government in that matter the statement which was released last Thursday by the hon. Minister of Pensions and National Health (Mr. Mackenzie) which concerns the welfare of the widows of veterans of the last war.

Ever since my election to this house I have devoted much of my time and endeavours to the relief of those ladies who were in needy circumstances. During the past three years I have had the honour to be an honorary president of the Quebec branch of the Non-Pensioned Veterans' Widows Association Incorporated. The headquarters of that body happen to be in the city of Verdun, and the president is one of the most respected among my constituents. For these reasons I regarded it as my imperative duty to do everything in my power to assist in obtaining justice for the needy widows of those Canadians who so magnificently contributed to our country's war effort of twenty-five years ago. Through the president of the Quebec branch they asked me this year to take steps to have a committee room in this building reserved for a delegation representing them that intended to come to Ottawa next Wednesday in a further attempt to impress their views upon the Minister of Pensions and National Health. Last week I received an assurance that room 268 could again be made available for them this year. But now I may say to the minister that his statement of last Thursday will deprive him of the pleasure of meeting again those gallant delegates, since their requests have now in a very substantial degree been met.

For the last five years these associations of veterans' widows have consistently appealed to members of this house that legislation be enacted to remedy the deplorable physical and moral condition of their members throughout the country. Time and again they have stated their grievances. With your permission, sir, I shall quote from the last brief which has been forwarded to each hon. member of this house, I believe on January 25 last, under the signature of Mrs. Margaret Wainford, president of the province of Quebec non-pensioned veterans' widows association, and with the

endorsement of eight similar bodies from Toronto, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Calgary, Vancouver and other cities.

We are again placing before you a request that a pension of \$40 a month be granted to all non-pensioned veterans' widows under the following categories:

(a) the widows of those men who were in receipt of a pension of 25 per cent but less than 50 per cent disability,

(b) the widows of those men who were in receipt of a pension of less than 25 per cent disability,

(c) the widows of those men who served in actual theatre of war though not in receipt of a pension,

(d) the widows of those men whose history sheet shows record of serious illness.

The Minister of Pensions and National Health stated a few days ago that provision is being made in this year's estimates to permit allowances for veterans' widows who, through advancing years or through mental and physical infirmity, are incapacitated from earning a decent living and are in necessitous circumstances.

I have no doubt that the attitude which the minister has taken in connection with this problem has already received the spontaneous approval of this house, and more particularly of the members who have given their strong support to the cause up to this day. I find it a duty to recognize the valuable assistance given by my fellow members from Trinity, (Mr. Roebuck), Davenport (Mr. MacNicol), Cariboo (Mr. Turgeon), Mount Royal (Mr. Whitman), St. Antoine-Westmount (Mr. Abbott), St. Ann (Mr. Healy), and Hochelaga (Mr. Eudes), and it is with sincere pleasure that I thank them on behalf of the Quebec branch of the association.

I do not hesitate, however, to state that the one who will be happiest to hear of the policy just announced is probably Mrs. Wainford, who has so ably and devotedly presided over our local association since its foundation in 1937. Replying to a question by the special committee on the Pension Act and the War Veteran's Allowance Act at its sitting of April 9, 1941, one of the Toronto delegates gave the following appreciation of her work:

Mrs. Wainford took up the torch in Quebec and she has never let it burn out.

This is a concise and eloquent admission of the debt of gratitude which the non-pensioned widows feel toward their courageous leader.

To-day we all join to praise the government for having listened with no less sympathy than efficacy to a just and meritorious case. By so doing the government has clearly demonstrated