

Supply—Veterans Affairs

Mr. Green: I want to get that clear; take the case I mentioned where the man gets a pension of \$25. He is allowed \$10 over and above war veterans allowance, so that he would get \$10 clear, and then the remaining \$15 of his pension would cut down the amount of his war veterans allowance to \$25.41. In the way these regulations read at the present time that man would be ineligible for any assistance from this fund, because he is not getting \$40.41 war veterans allowance.

Mr. Gregg: We are able to augment such a man's pension up to the maximum of the permissible income.

Mr. Green: But you do not have to augment it. He is entitled to a pension of \$25.

Mr. Gregg: His war veterans allowance, I should say.

Mr. Green: He is entitled to a pension of \$25 and under the War Veterans Allowance Act he is entitled to an allowance of \$25.41, making a total of \$50.41. Can the minister give him further help from this fund?

Mr. Gregg: No, we have already lifted it.

Mr. Green: But he could get that before this fund was ever brought into existence. There is no help for him at all from the fund, in those circumstances. Surely some discretion should be given to the district to help these men if they are in need.

Mr. Gregg: I believe I have answered the hon. member as best I can. The normal maximum augmentation of the \$25 pension for a single man would be another \$25.40, thus bringing it up to \$50.

Mr. Green: But he is entitled to get war veterans allowance bringing him up to \$50 anyway. I am asking whether he is entitled to any help from this fund.

Mr. Gregg: Not above the \$50 in this case, no.

Mr. Green: There is the other point I mentioned with which the minister has not dealt yet, the question of putting this into legislation.

Mr. Gregg: The answer to that briefly, Mr. Chairman, is that this last year has been the first year for the fund. I do not think my hon. friend is justified in criticizing us for increasing the amount of the estimate this year when we feel the need is there. We might have been subject to criticism if the need had been there and we had not increased the estimate.

Mr. Green: I am criticizing you because you have not increased the war veterans allowance.

[Mr. Gregg.]

Mr. Gregg: There is a good reason for that, and I should like to say a word about what our policy within the department is this year. Frankly, during this year, we would like to utilize this assistance fund to take care of hardship, as we started to do last year, while the discussions mature about old age security generally. There is no question about it; this War Veterans Allowance Act, with the assistance fund alongside of it, is old age security. If my hon. friend wishes me to tell him what I should like to see, it is this. Under the theory of the pre-ageing effect of battle, it has been established that war veterans should get the war veterans allowance ten years earlier than the old age pension would be received, or at the age of 60. I am glad that has happened, even though I do not agree that every individual who survived in battle was pre-aged by ten years. I am sure my hon. friend was not. Nevertheless, I am glad it happened.

When social security for the aged is worked out on behalf of all our people, then whether it is five years or ten years, whatever it might be, I hope that the amount of the war veterans allowance going to the veteran in each of the provinces, in that period between 60 and 70 we shall say, will be the same as it would be for all the people after the age of 70. In other words, in my own province at the present time the war veterans allowance between 60 and 70 is almost exactly the same as the old age pension for the rest of the people from 70 until death. In my hon. friend's province, for 75 per cent of the recipients, the war veterans allowance has been augmented to bring it up to \$50 per month as a sort of cost of living bonus. I should like to see the time when the veterans of the various provinces will receive the same as the residents of those provinces are receiving under the old age pension. Now, it is going to take a lot of planning to work that out, but in reality that is the real reason why I would rather see hardship overcome during these two years by this patchwork method, if you will, rather than by making an over-all increase from the eastern border of Saskatchewan to Newfoundland inclusive, which would bring the war veterans allowance, from 60 until death, ten dollars higher than the old age pension from 70 until death for the rest of the population.

Mr. Green: This is a temporary arrangement, pending some change in policy. I just want to say a word about the other point with which I was dealing. If a non-pensioned veteran drawing \$40.41 war veterans allowance has an income of \$10 outside his war veterans allowance, he can still get help