

*The Address—Mr. Herridge*

motion to widen the terms of reference so that we could deal with war veterans allowances. In effect there was a curtain drawn in front of the war veterans allowance at the spring session and we had no chance whatever to deal effectively with it.

At this fall session there was no word in the speech from the throne with regard to an increase in the basic pension or war veterans allowances. The government has been forced by the pressure of the opposition parties and veteran organizations across the country to give in on the question of the basic pension and the minister has announced that there is to be an increase. Whether it will be an increase of 33½ per cent, as has been asked for, or whether there will be another case of chiselling remains to be seen, since we have not had the figures. But we are told that nothing is to be done at this session with regard to the war veterans allowance; that a committee will be set up next year to deal with the whole matter and if it finds that there should be an increase, any increase will be made retroactive to January 1. That means that these older front-line troops will have to wait until next April or May before they get any increase in their allowance.

**Mr. Fair:** Live old horse and you will get grass.

**Mr. Green:** The hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Fair) is always able to make the apt remark because of his Irish ancestry. This change in the war veterans allowance should be made at this session. This problem should have been dealt with at this session and I urge upon the government that some action be taken now; that this matter be not put away for another six or more months.

Some provision could be made for interim payments. The regulations governing the war veterans assistance fund could be extended by order in council without the necessity of passing legislation. Something could be done to see that these men get an automatic increase in payments during the winter months. These recipients of war veterans allowances must be taken care of now and not be compelled to wait until next spring.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that very shabby treatment is being meted out to these old front-line veterans; treatment which does not fit in with the fine words that so often have been uttered about the men who have defended this country. Over the week end I happened to run across a reprint of the statement made by the king's prime ministers in May of 1944. If you will recall, there was a gathering then in London of all the prime ministers of the commonwealth, and they

issued a joint statement which was called a statement by the king's prime ministers. In it we find these words about the men in our armed forces:

To all our armed forces who in many lands are preserving our liberty with their lives . . . we express our admiration and gratitude.

Admiration and gratitude are very nice to get but they do not fill many stomachs. I urge that the government and the House of Commons see to it that at this session these front-line Canadian veterans get more than admiration and gratitude. See that they get a proper increase in the amount of the war veterans allowance and that there be a proper raising of the ceiling on their income.

**Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Quelch), which reads as follows:

Furthermore we regret that Your Excellency's advisers have failed to compensate the recipients of war veterans allowance for the increase in the cost of living by an appropriate increase in the amount of the allowance.

I read that in case we should forget the exact words of the subamendment, I must say that it gives me great pleasure to follow my former comrade in the 54th Kootenay battalion, a very famous battalion which, I might say, always gained its objectives. I have the idea that finally we are going to gain the objectives of those on this side of the house with respect to their proposal concerning war veterans allowance.

**An hon. Member:** The good old 54th.

**Mr. Herridge:** I am not going to speak at length on this question. The arguments in support of it have been placed before the house very clearly by the hon. member for Acadia. I suggest that anyone who wants to read a most convincing argument, supported by logic and accurate figures, should read the hon. member's speech at page 805 of *Hansard*. I thought he made a most convincing and unanswerable argument when he was speaking in support of the amendment that he moved. This evening the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green), who preceded me, has very neatly extended and concluded that argument and has rounded it out so that I cannot see how any government can fail to act on this matter without simply being blind to the facts, to argument and to the realities of the situation.

All speakers who have supported the subamendment have clearly demonstrated that the war veterans allowance has not kept pace with the cost of living. That is the major argument from this side of the house. Because of that, war veteran recipients in this country