

The Address—Mr. Gillis

In my opinion that is the type of veteran who deserves the utmost consideration in any legislation. There are hundreds and thousands of veterans who perhaps had a day, a week, or a month in the line, or in the service, and were lucky enough to get wounded, get out and get the benefit of the disability pension. There are many recipients of war veterans allowance who have suffered to a greater degree than the man who has lost a limb, because their bodies are wrecked. We should see that legislation is enacted that prohibits the need for a branch of the Legion to insert an advertisement such as the one I have mentioned in any newspaper in any part of this country. In my opinion the legislation should be so flexible that it would give administrative latitude to the welfare officers in any community to provide for that type of case brought to his attention by the Legion and certified as a legitimate case. That kind of advertisement should not appear. I do not believe the administration of veterans affairs in any part of Canada wants that kind of thing to appear in any newspaper. Something is wrong when it does appear.

Another disability the war veterans allowance recipient suffers is this. He establishes a pension of \$40.41, or the maximum provided for a married veteran. That may be made up, as it is in many cases of a \$25 disability pension, or a \$15 disability pension, augmented by the veterans allowance. There is a 25 per cent increase in the disability pension, but, because of the means test in the War Veterans Allowance Act the allowance of the recipient of war veterans allowance is reduced by the 25 per cent that was added to the basic pension. Twenty-five per cent on the small pension he receives is not very much. When it is taken out of the war veterans allowance it does not make him very happy, because he lost 25 per cent in 1948. Under this arrangement the war veterans allowance recipient who is on a partial disability pension and a partial war veterans allowance loses that 33½ per cent. That does not make him very happy, and it is because of the means test in the War Veterans Allowance Act. In that particular instance serious consideration should be given to removing the means test from the War Veterans Allowance Act.

Another point that I should like the parliamentary assistant—who is here now paying attention as he always does, and who understands these matters very clearly—to put in his little book or to place on the record is this angle. In many industries across this country they have what they call a welfare scheme. They pay into a special fund as an

insurance against sickness. This is in addition to unemployment insurance, which does not cover a man who is unemployed because of sickness. Therefore many of these industries have what they call a welfare fund. The particular case I am referring to is the coal workers relief association. The steelworkers also have it. If they are unemployed through sickness they can receive for a limited time perhaps \$8, \$9 or \$10 a week as a sick benefit. Mind you, that is an insurance they have paid for, and they are entitled to it if they are off sick. The older veteran breaks down and is entitled to war veterans allowance because he can no longer be employed in that industry. He is also entitled to his \$8 or \$9 a week welfare insurance that he has been paying into for fifteen or twenty years. But when war veterans allowance is granted, it is granted minus the amount that he will receive from the insurance that he paid for over the years. When that is generally understood, what happens? The average industrial worker who is paying into this welfare scheme says to himself: "Why should I pay that insurance? I receive no benefit from it. I pay 40 cents, 50 cents or 60 cents a week as insurance against sickness, and when I am in need of it I find that I have insured the government. It is deducted from the war veterans allowance that I would have received had I not paid into that welfare scheme." When we are considering amendments to the act, some attention should be given to that matter. That is the means test again that prevents the recipient of war veterans allowance, under the circumstances I have described, from receiving benefits of the insurance that he has paid for.

Another point I think requires amendment is that having to do with imperial veterans' widows. In my opinion a very rank piece of discrimination is contained in the act in that regard. The act was amended, and rightly so, to include the widows of imperial veterans who had residence in Canada for twenty years. In many cases the widow still resides in Canada, and has been here for the required number of years. The veteran, however, may have passed away after he had been here fifteen years, or nineteen years, or perhaps nineteen years and a few months, thus leaving his widow ineligible to receive the war veterans allowance. I do not think there would be much money involved in making the change I suggest. Pathetic cases have been brought to my attention, where there has been no income. The widow of the Canadian serviceman who may live next door is eligible, and draws the allowance; but because the good Lord decided that this other husband should leave this earth before the