

job and make it possible for those who are dependent upon war pensions to live properly and decently, as they should.

It is not surprising that demands like these should be made, when the government has allowed the cost of living to go up by removing their controls. I understand the present basic pension rate was struck about 1926, and I think we all realize that at that time the legislators of this country believed that basic rate would guarantee a certain standard of living. But as soon as you allow the cost of living to get completely out of line with that basic pension, in effect you are completely repudiating everything you assured these people they would get. As it stands today the pension is completely inadequate. I believe the conditions which exist among the families of many pensioners right across this dominion, because of the inadequacy of the pension, are a disgrace to Canada. It is a blot on our record that these conditions should be allowed to continue to exist until March, 1948.

The inadequacy of this pension I think has been pretty well proved by the previous speaker, and I think even by the statement of the minister when he set out the basis upon which the present rates were set. As has been said already, today \$900 a year is practically nothing. The increase from \$75 a month to \$87 a month for a one hundred per cent disability pensioner just does not mean anything. It does not meet the requests of the veterans themselves; it does not meet the requests of the veterans organizations, and it certainly does not meet the situation which now exists. We are hoping that when the bill as it stands today goes before the veterans committee a fight will be put up to see that the pension is placed on a proper basis, one which will meet the situation as it is today.

The government has gone on record as believing in decontrol, and therefore it would appear that it does not want to control the cost of living. If it does not, then whatever basic pension it sets can be easily upset within a few months.

The other feature we advocate and shall continue to advocate is that the basic pension be set high enough. I agree with a previous speaker who said that \$100 a month for a 100 per cent disability is about adequate in March 1948. The needs of the veteran will not be properly met if we leave it at that. Some machinery must be brought into action within the act under which those who are responsible for administration can guarantee to veterans who are suffering, disabled and helpless that they will be permitted to live decently and well, and to know that they

have the form of security which the people of Canada would wish them to have.

It is necessary that there be geared to the pension some scheme by which a sliding scale would become operative, so that in the event of an increase in the cost of living the pension would automatically increase. There should be provision for either a cost of living bonus or a grant of some kind. It is our duty, and it is the special responsibility of the House of Commons, to see that those who have made sacrifices to save this country in time of war, and who as a result of their efforts are disabled, shall not suffer.

We must keep constantly in mind the needs of war veterans, discharged for medical reasons, a large percentage of whom are psychopathic cases. I believe that speaking generally the pension commission has ruled that such cases are not considered to be pensionable. Many of these veterans returned from the war suffering from nervous disorder. They have tried to carry on with their work, but have been unable to do so. On occasions they have to lay off for weeks or months at a time, but they are not permitted to receive a pension from the government. Special consideration must be given to these cases. There are altogether too many of them, and I hope that when the committee considers revision of the Pension Act, and a revision of the regulations under which the pension commission operates, it will see to it that more is done for these deserving cases.

It is not right that men who have returned from war in a disabled condition, and who are unable to carry on in their work, should be denied a pension when it is clear that their disability has resulted from or been aggravated by their war activities. Not only are veterans and veterans organizations asking for this revision, but boards of trade, village and city councils and other organizations are stirred by the plight of many pensioners living within their midst.

It seems to me the farther we get away from war the more likely we are to forget the men who fought. In the report given this afternoon by the minister I was surprised to learn that in 1947 there were 147 veterans of world war I whose pensions were decreased. Many pensioners of world war I who feel that their disability has increased and that they should make application for increased pensions fear that if an examination is held and they are at the mercy of the commission their pensions may be decreased. That condition should not exist.

The average age at the present time of a pensioner from world war I must be about 59 years. Surely pensioners who have suffered