

Halton MP. Gives Views Pension Amendments

Sandy Best, who is fast becoming one of the most prominent speakers Halton County has ever sent to Ottawa, spoke to the House of Commons again on February 9th on a topic pertinent to war veterans — the amendments to the Veterans' Pensions Act. Here is his speech as recorded in Hansard.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak briefly this afternoon on the amendments to the Pension Act now before the house. Remarks have been made by many members about the excellent prospects envisaged by the resolution and the importance it will have to the some million and a quarter veterans throughout our country.

First of all, however, before discussing the measure I should like to congratulate the new Minister of Veterans Affairs. I think we all must pay tribute also to Col. Brooks, the last minister, a member of the house for some 25 years, during whose period of approximately three and one-half years as minister of the department many important changes and improvements were made.

The resolution before us at the moment is I think, an excellent one, and comments to that effect have been made by officials of the Canadian Legion and other interested bodies across Canada. I should like to make some comments on the purposes of the legislation. Following upon its announcement in the speech from the throne, it is proposed by this legislation to increase the rate of pensions payable to disabled war veterans and to the dependants of those who lost their lives in the service of Canada. Incidentally, the number who lost their lives in the first and second world wars total some 104,000 Canadians. This, then, is one objective of the legislation.

Second, its purpose is to provide for increases in the maximum grants for burial expenses of pensioners. The amendment provides that the rates of such grants will keep pace with similar payments for veterans who die in our treatment hospitals. The purposes and objectives of the legislation were outlined in some detail by the new Minister of Veterans Affairs on December 12th, 1960 as found on pages 734 and 735 of Hansard.

A third aspect of the resolution deals with Canadian citizens who served in an allied force during either of the wars. It is proposed to bring in an amendment under which they may claim entitlement from the Canadian pension commission when their claims have been rejected by the government of the allied force in which they served.

Fourth, there are certain amendments which will affect payments to children. As the minister pointed out, the rates are to be increased. In addition, there are certain technical changes involving the month in which a child becomes ineligible for such a pension during the sixteenth and seventeenth years. A further amendment will also provide for equalization of payments to all the children of a family rather than the present procedure whereby a greater amount is paid on behalf of the first child than on behalf of the second.

I am sure that these and other amendments will do much to bring a greater measure of fairness to this most important legislation. I am sure that some of the miscellaneous amendments and procedural changes in the Pension Act and its administration will also have a beneficial effect on our veterans and their dependants.

Many Gave Lives In this legislation we are concerned, of course, with our veterans. That goes without saying. Many members of our forces gave their lives and many others gave their health. In all cases they have given a considerable period of their lives to the protection of all of us here in Canada and, indeed, of the whole free world. The numbers of our Canadian veterans are very considerable. I mentioned earlier a million and a quarter people. The figures appear to indicate that from World War I we have some 240,000 survivors, and of this number approximately 49,000 are pensioners with disabilities exceeding 25 per cent. In the case of World War II the figure is 826,000 and the number of pensioners is some 100,000, or slightly over 12 per cent. To these pensioners we indeed owe a great deal. We cannot measure what we owe them, of course, in terms of dollars and cents, but we must try; and the process must be a continual one in order to bring about an increased measure of fairness in compensation to them for what they gave to us.

Millions Added I think we might look briefly at the past record. During the last three or four years the record has indeed been considerable. During Colonel Brooks' occupation of the portfolio of veterans affairs some \$47½ million was added by consent of the house to the amount being received by our veterans in disability pensions and war veterans allowances, and through increases to widows and dependent parents, educational assistance to children and increases for hospitals. This is indeed a considerable figure. Other things have been done as well. The resistance requirement for allied veterans was lowered from 20 to 10 years, and additional funds were made available for the Veterans' Land Act as well as in home construction loans for veterans. In summary, I think the record of the last three and a half or four years has been considerable and important.

Continue Service One thing that strikes me about the many veterans in my riding, and I am sure this is true across the country, is that

wage in 1919 was \$900, about on a par with the pension granted at that time. The composite average wage has been multiplied four times: I think this is a measure of the plight of some of our veterans. We are most pleased to see our government taking important action in this field.

Benefits of Doubt It has been pointed out by several members during the last two days that section 70, the benefit of doubt section, as applied by our pension commission needs some attention. The Canadian Legion has indicated, and these figures must be available to all, that nearly fifty percent of the cases heard on appeal during the year 1958-59 were successful. I feel that this rather extraordinary record points up the difficulty that there must be during the first hearing, and suggests that some change is needed. There should be a clearer interpretation of section 70 in order to give the veteran the benefit of the doubt. Indeed, I think the benefit of the doubt should not be interpreted in favour of the commission, but must be given to the veteran himself.

It is not unnatural that in certain cases, perhaps judged on the medical evidence alone, some doubt would remain as to whether such injuries or complications resulted during wartime or before or after. In a field such as medicine this sort of doubt is only natural, and that such doubt should occur in a large number of cases is only natural. If we are putting the elimination of doubt on this basis of medical certainty, then it is only normal that a large number of cases will be turned down. However, if the veteran were given the benefit of the doubt I think we would reach a more equitable solution. This is one thing my Legion members are requesting.

Appeal Boards The next request is for some change in the appeal board situation, perhaps in the way of balancing the composition of the board with a doctor, a lawyer and a layman. This point has been mentioned to me on numerous occasions. It may be that with such appeal boards the medical doubt takes precedence over the doubt that may exist in other parts of the case, particularly if there is more than one doctor. If the composition of such boards were changed somewhat it might be that a more realistic application of existing laws would be made.

These, Mr. Chairman, are the matters that have been brought to my attention by the veterans in my riding. They are delighted at the prospects for changes in this legislation, and we are indeed looking forward to the spelling out of the details regarding pensions and other matters in the immediate future.

Community Spirit A new Legion building in the town of Burlington in my riding has added much to that area. As an example of the community spirit and the continuing service which has been rendered by these veterans, I recall a few years ago when a school burned down in the town of Acton, a portion of the Canadian Legion building in that town was immediately turned over to the school children for their classes. Winter works projects are playing a part in the Legion activities, and funds have been contributed towards various such projects in my area. The veterans, acting through the Legion and working in community activities, are doing many things on a provincial and national basis.

One example of this, which comes to my mind is the eye bank. I also believe that about \$75,000 or \$80,000 has been paid out each year in scholarships to children going to universities in Ontario. These are some of the contributions they have made, Mr. Chairman.

Disabled Veterans What do our veterans ask of us in so far as this legislation is concerned, and perhaps with respect to future amendments or administrative changes? In talking to the veterans in my riding I note that the first thing they request is a substantial pension increase to disabled veterans. I should like to look briefly at a recent issue of the Legion magazine, the Legionary, for January, 1961, pages 4 and 7. We find that some of the financial problems facing our disabled veterans are outlined there. For instance, in the period from 1920 to 1957, and indeed until today, the annual pension of a 100 per cent disabled single pensioner has been increased from \$900 a year to \$1,800. The amount was doubled in that period of about 40 years.

If one compares that, as this issue of the Legionary does, with what they call a composite average wage from the year 1919 to 1958, one gets a different picture. This composite

High School Teaching Staff Increased by Four Soon

The Georgetown High School teaching staff will probably be enlarged by four next term.

At a meeting of the Georgetown and District High School Board Tuesday night the principal, J. L. Lambert accompanied his budget report with the announcement that at least four additional teachers will be required by the fall.

The new hirings would bring the total number of

Georgetown high school teachers to twenty-nine, excluding the principal and vice-principal.

A program of insurance proposed to the board by Georgetown insurance agents present at the meeting is under consideration by the trustees and may be adopted. The group were accompanied by Mr. Boyd of Western British American Group of Canada.

International Director Attends Lions Anniversary

When the Lions Club of Georgetown celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this Friday, a distinguished visitor from the States will join them at a dinner dance in Guelph which marks the occasion.

Charles W. Mowery of York, Pennsylvania, who is a director of Lions International will be a speaker at the dinner in the Royal Hotel. He is controller at the U.S. Naval Ordnance plant at York.

Mr. Mowery has served the Mount Rose Lions Club in all offices and his district as zone chairman, deputy governor and governor. He is a member of the executive council of Heidelberg Church School, past president of the National Machine Accountants Association, York

Chapter and past vice president of the York Toastmasters. He is a graduate of Rider College, Trenton, N.J.

The club has invited the 12 living charter members to join with them for the occasion. They are Harold McClure, only charter member who is still active in the organization, Arthur Beaumont, David Brill, Harold Cleave, Tref Imbleau, A. Fuller, John D. Kelly, Howard Kentner, Gordon McLintock, Arol O'Neill, H. Redshaw, and William P. Thompson.

Charter members also included the late William F. Bradley, Charles Burnside, David Crichton, William V. Grant, William H. Long, H. R. Mimmis, J. B. Mackenzie and Edward McWhirter.

Present Parade Float Trophies to Winners

Cups and plaques won in the Santa Claus parade were presented to prizewinners last Tuesday at the dinner meeting of the Lions Club in the Legion auditorium.

Doug Ward received the John R. Barber trophy won by Georgetown & District Scouters for their float while Walter Bieln presented the Georgetown Herald trophy to Hank Van Lith for the Bata Shoe entry in the parade.

The Rotary Club was a double winner. Ralph Ursel received the Chamber of Commerce trophy from Alex Blackwell, while Clare Francis presented the Lions trophy to the same club for having the best float in the parade.

Lion Ivan Crabtree was in the chair for the first part of the meeting, with Lion Chief Jim Jones taking over the final portion of the business.

Announcement was made of the establishment of the Ed Pries memorial trophy, a permanent reminder of the services rendered to the club by the late Mr. Pries. A letter was presented for club use by a member, Fred Zorge.

Jackets will be presented to the club sponsored juvenile hockey team, and Ernie Bodnar was given permission to conduct a small lucky draw to raise money for the jackets.

The club is dropping its St. Patrick's dance this year, but is planning a gala event on February 24th when the thirtieth anniversary of charter night will be held at the Royal Hotel, Guelph.

Clarence Kennedy, who was club secretary when he moved to Kitchener last year, was a guest at the meeting and invited the club to pay a visit to Kitchener and put on a program for the Lions there.

GOOD AT IT TOO "Does your wife select your clothes?" "No." She only picks the pockets.

Reviews Life of Rock of Ages Author

Mrs. J. B. Hicks was hostess for the Park group W.A. of St. John's United Church on Wednesday last week. Miss Hazel Harrison took as her devotional theme "Favourite Hymns" and read several Psalms which are the basis for many fine old hymns. Giving an interesting account of the life of Augustus Toplady, who wrote the hymn "Rock of Ages," Miss Harrison stated that Toplady was converted at the age of 16 when he attended an Evangelistic service held in an old barn in Ireland and six years later was ordained as minister. This favorite old hymn of all ages, was sung in closing.

The roll call was answered with paying membership fees. Mrs. Ian Fleming read a most interesting letter from Rev. Donald Richardson of Norway House, giving an insight into his busy life there.

Mrs. R. Wright read several poems written by the Canadian poet Bliss Carman and gave many interesting details of his life. Mrs. Wright had the privilege of meeting this famous person while on a holiday down East. Mrs. R. MacArthur read an account of how St. Valentine's day is celebrated in other lands, after which each member received a valentine and was asked to read the verse on it.

Mrs. J. Wyatt and Mrs. Nielsen assisted the hostess in serving a delicious Valentine cake and a cup of tea.

Mrs. M. LAUGHRAN Port Arthur Going without food can be as bad for your health as being overweight. You can reduce in a safe, sensible way which permits you to eat three meals a day and still lose weight. If you wish to reduce easily and sensibly, go to your drug store and ask for the Naran Plan.



DRAMA COMES TO TOWN
—Photo by Charles Troit
ADAM OAKHEART (Gordon Hunt) the stalwart blacksmith's son, is reading an emotion-packed letter to Nellie (Mrs. Vera MacDonald) his ever-true maiden, and her sweet old mother (Ann Cartwright) while Mookie (Paul Baker) the faithful hired hand looks on intelligently (?) It's all part of Dirty Work at the Crossroads, first production of Georgetown Little Theatre this Friday and Saturday night in Wigglesworth auditorium.

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ving a delicious Valentine cake and a cup of tea. Mrs. H. Woodcroft moved a vote of thanks to all participants and a social time was enjoyed.

Truck Over Bank Completely Wrecked

A 1948 Fargo panel truck was completely wrecked when it plunged over a twelve foot bank at the base of Elm St. last week.

The truck, driven by Cecil Albert Grahame, of R.R.1, Georgetown, was proceeding south on Elm St. and approaching a wide culvert at the base of the steep Elm St. hill when it left the road. The truck landed on its left side and came to rest on the frozen surface of the creek. The driver was uninjured.

Cst. Ron Rankin made the investigation.

Reduce On Three Meals a Day

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Gardening Ideas Are Exchanged by Panel

At the February public meeting of the Georgetown Horticultural Society held last Wednesday evening in the Howard Wigglesworth school, a panel discussion on "New Ideas in Gardening for a New Year" was the main feature of the program.

Mrs. George Troisdale as moderator introduced the panel — Miss D. Stone, Miss A. Lash Miller, Mrs. W. R. Norton, Mrs. Wellington Wilson and Mrs. L. DeVries. Each member dealt in turn with questions from the moderator or the audience on such topics as: how to have a green thumb without an aching back; how to protect and prune roses; where to get the best information from books; how to control red spider; how to get a Hoyle plant to bloom, etc.

A movie film entitled "Four Seasons," showing the beautiful Gatineau Park at different seasons of the year was shown.

The president, Chris Walker, as chairman of the meeting thanked the panel members and Mrs. Harley as projectionist for their contributions to the program. Lucky door prizes were drawn by Miss A. Lash Miller and Mr. H. J. Herder. Refreshments were served at the close of the meeting by the social committee.

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