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Feature: **New Minister, Old Minister - what will change?**

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New Minister, Old Minister - what will change?

*Ministers First Words Ring Alarm Bells |
Les premiers mots du ministre sonnent des cloches d'alarme*

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New Minister, Old Minister - what will change?

By Perry Gray, Chief Editor VVi

The minor cabinet shuffle saw the first liberal minister, Kent Hehr, replaced by Seamus O'Reagan. Both men were rookie federal MP's and therefore had little experience, which begs the question why were they selected?

There were plenty of new MP's so some cabinet appointments were bound to put such rookies into senior leadership positions. It is less apparent why politicians who are Veterans were not selected. A Veteran was appointed as parliamentary secretary to MVA, Karen McCrimmon, who served until January 2017. Now the senior Veteran is the deputy minister, Walt Natynczyk.

Of note, the two ministers were introduced through the media as having medical disabilities. It is unclear whether this was to show that they would be more empathetic to the problems of disabled Veterans, or that Veterans should be more sympathetic to them.

What should be most important to all Canadians is what they can do for Veterans to honour Canada's debt to the Veterans Community.

If either minister was limited by his own conditions, then they should have declined the position.

In my opinion, which is shared by others, Kent Hehr was not the right candidate:

"The departing minister - Kent Hehr - faced challenges around the cabinet table. He was a personable and welcoming face during his visits to Charlottetown but failed to deliver on some key Liberal election promises - except re-opening district offices. Other issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness and disability pensions remain unsolved." The Guardian (PEI) 30 August 2017

The same writer suggested that Mr O'Regan is a good choice:

"His own experiences will place him in a good position to deal with critical issues facing our country's veterans. They fought our battles and now deserve the assurances that their country will look after them in their time of need."

I for one need more evidence before believing that Mr O'Regan will be a good minister, particularly as Veterans deserve a great minister, who can solve the issues that no federal minister has been able to solve in many decades.

Was Kent Hehr MIA?

There was been a significant decrease in the public activities of the minister in his last six months in office, which is why I asked the above question.

He did occasionally make an appearance and participate in political events, but it was usually to repeat the standard excuses that he needs more time to implement his 15 point mandate.

Much of the mandate was never discussed. Instead the minister talked about his accomplishments including increasing his staff at VAC and the re-opening of VAC offices. Neither puts more money in Veterans pockets nor guarantees better services from VAC.

What about the increase of ELB from 75% to 90%? Well for Veterans earning the least amount, this 15% “raise” adds as little as \$150 per month. And it is taxable.

It is a insignificant amount compared to the \$6 billion that the minister said that the government will spend on Veterans. He failed to provide details on how this money will benefit Veterans. Based on past government practices, some of the money may be returned to the government’s piggy bank just to prove that the minister ran an efficient department. That is if it actually is given to VAC first.

Veterans have to wait for VAC to loosen the purse strings for other benefits to supplement ELB including life long pensions for pain and suffering (a non-taxable benefit). The minister remained mute on when this will happen.

Currently, Kent seems more concerned about winning re-election in 2019. His riding is in a Conservative stronghold and he only won with a margin of 750 votes in 2015. Before the last election, it had been a Conservative riding for four decades. He knows that the Conservative Party will be “gunning” for his riding, although he feels confident of his chances to avoid defeat.

Given that Alberta tends to vote conservatively, it is rare for a non-conservative to win in a federal election. This trend dates back to WW2.

There is a lot at stake for Kent Hehr. He earns more than \$250,000 per year as a minister. He will also be entitled to a pension if he is re-elected and serves until 2024.

I am sure that he disagrees with me, and he has made lots of claims on his Facebook page. Being a social media fan does not make him a good minister. His publicity activities reach a very small audience, for example, he has less than 20,000 followers on Facebook. Nothing got published after his meetings with Veterans and stakeholders, except very brief media advisories. Of course notifications only get published if he has a meeting. Again for such a publicity lover, Kent really did not know how to promote himself. He really is a small fish in a big pond!

Kent promoted his visit with veterans officials in Washington at the end of June:

“Pleased to have spent the morning with officials from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs & Secretary Shulkin, great opportunity to learn & share best practices to support veterans. Had a productive conversation with Secertary (sic) Shulkin on veteran homelessness, mental health & career transition”

This seems like a novel concept despite the fact that VAC liaises regularly with US, UK, Australia and other allies about Veterans. VAC has liaison offices that are supposedly looking at best practices; unfortunately, there seems to be a severe lack of implementation of the best ideas.

The US has similar problems as Canada and has not been able to find solutions for many including wait times for medical services. In fact on 30 May, 2014, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki resigned from office due to the fallout from the the wait time scandal. His replacement, Robert McDonald, advised President Trump not to privatise VA health services (so that private health care companies would not replace public providers).

Can VAC learn anything from its American (or by extension other) counter-part? Based on the repeated delays implementing changes or worse ignoring problems, it is not apparent that VAC can learn much.

“I also got the opportunity to visit the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and learn about the multiple programs they offer such as art therapy.” Kent Hehr

Thanks for the reminder to all Veterans that Canada does not have one single facility offering similar services because the government decided that having such facilities was no longer a government responsibility.

Fun fact, the US has 152 VA medical centres. Canada has 0.

Canadian Veterans have to wait for space in generic provincial facilities, which do not offer any programs designed specifically for Veterans.

So Kent Hehr saw something that his government does not want Canadians to see or have.

No need to repeat the lack of government support for Veteran career transition since even VAC ignores a hiring priority, as usual. Or that VAC has yet to release information on solving homelessness and improving mental health care. After all most of the responsibilities have been pushed to the provinces!

This Washington visit just highlighted his ignorance again...and again. And if you know the other Canadians in the photos on the Facebook page, they include people who have been spending a lot of time unable to find solutions to systemic problems, but enjoying the financial benefits and international travel perks of senior bureaucrats.

I got the usual response when I checked for information on this “field trip” from the VAC website:

“Your search - Secretary Shulkin - did not match any documents. No pages were found containing "Secretary Shulkin".”

In fact, one has to spend a lot of time searching to learn what Kent does, apart from representing his riding.

Again this is based on searching for his name in media reports and on the VAC website.

Even for an historic even like the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge (9 April 2017), it was a challenge to find information. The minister made sure he was in plenty of photo ops, as usual.

Unfortunately, like many Canadians, the minister concentrated on the sacrifices made by war-time Veterans. Yes, it is great that Canada has monuments like Vimy Ridge and there is a new museum showing the horrors of war and this is something that we all need to understand if there is ever a hope of ending war.

Meanwhile what about the living Veterans?

I was present when the minister gave testimony to the Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in March 2017. This was given prior to the annual budget report. His presentation highlighted many of the systemic problems, which continue to plague VAC. He did not offer much in the way of real solutions or even try very hard. Much of the time, he let his deputy minister answer questions. This indicates how ignorant Kent Hehr is with regards to his department and the Veterans Community. For a politician, ignorance is not bliss.

For example, Veterans are supposedly benefiting from a priority hiring program of the government (current levels of Veterans being hired at 2.2% in the public service). VAC employs 115 and has only hired 18 since the minister took office in 2015. VAC had hired a total of 381 people and still had another 19 vacancies.. Nobody asked him why greater priority was not given to hiring Veterans in VAC. (see Bill C-27, the Veterans Hiring Act, for details)

Even the appointments to VRAB in June 2017 included a minority of Veterans, and only eight of the 17 members are Veterans (CAF and RCMP).

Why is not every new hire a Veteran?

The hirings included 113 case managers so that VAC can lower the ratio from 1:40 to 1:25. Two things to note about case managers, there were questions about why Saskatoon did not have a permanent case manager (the position is filled in Regina so commuting is required), and the response was the 2,900 clients did not warrant one. A good explanation of how VAC calculated this arrangement was not given. The ratio of 1:25 was also not discussed.

Fun fact, VAC decides which clients are entitled to the services of a case manager (and other services), and determined the client ratio. VAC can terminate services for any reason as many Veterans know from experience.

Fun fact, only five of the 2,900 Saskatoon clients are entitled to case management. This information surprised the committee members, who wrongly assuming that ALL Veterans have a case manager. The majority of Veterans have service agents, who have a much larger number of clients. There are six employees for the other 2,895 Veterans in

Saskatoon (or 1:482.5)

The minister stated that following consultations, “90% of the recommendations into action within three years and the full suite of changes in five”. He did not give examples of any recommendations or why 10% were deferred (or ignored). Full suite could mean 100% or not, the language is ambiguous.

With regards to lifetime pensions for pain and suffering, the minister stated:

“Your veterans can expect this promise to be kept within the four-year term of the Liberal government. I will be proud to stand up and say we have delivered that pension option for our veterans.”

Two observations: why “your” instead of “our” or “Canadian” Veterans; and there are not many months left of the four years, and the minister has mentioned nothing about what to expect.

The minister believes that he is making adequate progress in accomplishing his mandate:

“We accomplished six of those 15 things, and two of them regarding financial security have really moved the meter a long way, and that's according to our Veterans Ombudsman.”

Please review the 15 specific goals of his mandate and judge for yourself whether or not they have been accomplished. Personally, I do not trust the minister and I do not trust the ombudsman when it comes to any facts or figures. Neither gentleman seems willing to provide details.

Even without knowing the details, his four years is almost to the mid-point and since he refuses to provide timelines, it is hard to estimate when each is possibly going to be achieved.

For example, the minister stated that anyone receiving 100% of the NVC lump sum would be given a “top up” dating back to the first year (2006). He omitted that most Veterans receive 11% of the lump sum, so what do they get as a “top up”?

Transition from CAF and RCMP is a major concern and the minister addressed the issue:

“Many people in the military do their military service and transfer successfully. Still, we have a far too large number, roughly 27%, who struggle in some form or fashion, whether that be employment, education, addiction, mental health, illness, or injury, and that is why we have Veterans Affairs. That's why we need to professionalize the release. We have a lot of work to be done. This is not going to be solved overnight. I wish it were, but it's not.

We're working to ensure that we professionalize the release, and I am very happy with the commitment of the Minister of National Defence, the Chief of the Defence Staff, and our

department, who are working together to solve these issues. It's a financial issue, a rehab issue, a return-to-work issue, a return-to-school issue. There are a whole host of things that are going to allow us to have more success. Those conversations are getting detailed, and I can tell you they're moving along.”

Fun fact, the Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU) has been plagued with problems since its creation, and has had three commanding officers in the last year (a total of six since it was established). The latest announced his retirement this month after only three months in the position (April-July 2017)!

This seems to indicate that the government is still doing a bad job with the “transition phase”. This has been noted in government and media reports, but this should not discourage Kent Hehr from believing in “sunny ways”.

With regards to long term care, the minister mentioned that there are about 6,400 Veterans including 600 “young” Veterans in 1,500 medical facilities. Sadly as already discussed, there are no VAC health care institutions and the last one, St Anne de Bellevue, has experienced many problems (yet another failure in a transition process).

When asked about Mefloquine, the minister replied:

“Any veteran who comes forward who has an illness or injury tied to military service will be served by our department with the best available technology and expertise that this country can provide.”

This is one of the best examples of the minister’s ignorance. Since provinces determine what will be provided in terms of health care, how does he know whether ALL Veterans get the best?

The minister made some comments about his department, which really upset me:

”I'm very proud of the Veterans Affairs staff throughout this country, from our head office in P.E.I., where Veterans Affairs is located, right through this country where people are working in our various offices, our various centres, and our OSI clinics and the like. They are highly professional public servants, highly committed to veterans' outcomes, who are doing their job every day, and I'm very proud of them. I'll put our case managers and their effectiveness and their commitment to the job up against virtually anyone you can name throughout government and throughout the private sector.”

These are the same people who have been failing to provide adequate support to ALL Veterans for many, many years. They are the people who reject applications, refuse services, misinterpret policy and often disrespect Veterans. Rarely are any punished for failing to fulfil their mandate. All that Canadians get is political praise for the hard work and dedication of VAC!

Of note, neither the minister nor the deputy stayed for the second part of the meeting

during which three senior bureaucrats provided more details of current and future operations. It just seemed like two rats leaving a sinking ship, but that is my biased impression.

Enter Another Minister

Seamus O'Regan may or may not be expected to complete the 2015 mandate from the Prime Minister. If he has the same mandate, then he will have to be quick as there are only two years before the run-up to the next election. Kent Hehr spent a lot of time waffling about one very important issue, the life long pension.

My fear is that the new minister will once again ask Veterans to be patient until he is better educated on his duties. Veterans debated this same thing six months after Kent Hehr was appointed.

Time is a luxury, which can not be wasted. The only major change is the appointment of the new minister, so what is his department doing besides offering excuses for delays?

There are more issues than those identified in the 2015 mandate letter and these include problems with the New Veterans Charter, updating older legislation like the Pension Act, homeless Veterans, Mefloquine and mental health.

In my opinion, it is a good thing that the federal government is procrastinating about international peacekeeping as there are many systemic problems that need to be fixed before Canada has to deal with the next Somalia Incident.

The minister has already shown that he does not know very much and seems willing to accept the information provided by his senior bureaucrats - hook, line and sinker.

For example, he stated that:

“most ex-soldiers, when they go before the board, are successful in their appeals.” CBC News 18 Sep 2017

He is mistaken. In 2016-17, VRAB ruled favourably in 42% of Review decisions and 26% of Appeal decisions. Furthermore, many Veterans remain disgruntled even if VRAB rules in their favour because the board often does not redress all of their grievances.

If he can not get his facts and figures straight, how will he fair with making major decisions?

Perry Gray is a Regular Force veteran, serving as the Chief Editor of VVi. Perry has been with VVi for 16 years.



Ministers First Words Ring Alarm Bells | Les premiers mots du ministre sonnent des cloches d'alarme

Minister O'Regan's First Words Ring Alarm Bells: Liberals Must do Better.

By Sean Bruyea

September 18, 2017 at 8:32am

VVi 19 Sep 2017

If the first public comments of newly appointed Minister Seamus O'Regan are anything to go by, veterans and the governing Liberals should be worried. The Trudeau government will have to understand veterans far better. They also should be eager to do more than they promised if they wish to reverse seven decades of ghettoizing veterans and their families into arbitrary castes and classes.

Minister O'Regan in his first advertised action visited the Veterans Affairs (VAC) bureaucracy in Charlottetown P.E.I., the only federal department with its head office located outside Ottawa: "I decided to make it a top priority that I get out here and meet people as quickly as I can."

For those who have battled VAC over the years, and sometimes decades, it is the senior bureaucracy in Charlottetown that has been the principal source of an often dismissive and antagonistic relationship with veterans and their families. It is not unlike Ottawa's paternalistic and hostile treatment of Canada's indigenous peoples. That the Minister thought his "top" (and first) priority was the senior bureaucracy and not veterans, sounds a foreboding trumpet call.

During his first visit to Charlottetown, the Minister was briefed on the "top priority" of "caseload" ratios as the bureaucracy refers to the number of veterans managed by each case manager. "I've got a lot to learn", Minister O'Regan told CBC, "I understand that that is a big issue, the issue of case loads [sic]". Frustratingly, "caseloads" have been the "top priority" for VAC and its Ministers for five years or more. I and my colleagues have been writing and speaking on this issue since at least 2004.

In an effort to reduce these caseload ratios, veterans have told me that local VAC officials delay months in responding, meeting, and providing minimal follow-up services. Some then "ditch" the veterans so that other "cases" can be likewise quickly processed.

Any earnest Minister and sincere government must tackle VAC's bureaucratic culture. It denies there is a problem, discredits those advocating for change, dismisses suffering, obfuscates, studies, delays further, misleads media and veterans into believing action is being taken, and finally manipulates stakeholders into accepting wholly inadequate Band-Aid measures. Culture at Veteran Affairs' head office is far removed from Ottawa's oversight, secluded from national media attention, and living in a dimension alien to the reality of Canada's veterans and their families.

Meanwhile, a host of unaddressed and often grave problems remain.

VAC, the department mandated to care and treat veterans and their families, has only begun to monitor veteran suicides, but only after government was shamed by a series of media investigations. Meanwhile, veteran pioneers, Louise Richard and Luc Levesque, pleaded for government to study the matter...over 20 years ago.

In the 1990's, Louise also called upon government to monitor and help homeless veterans followed by Don Leonardo of VeteransCanada(.ca) beginning in 2001. It wasn't until media embarrassment in 2014 that VAC hastily awarded a sole-source contract for over a million dollars with questionable defined goals and follow-up quality controls. The contract apparently provides some impromptu assistance to select homeless veterans. Certainly the Auditor General should have a look at this. Meanwhile, we still don't have an accurate and comprehensive picture of homeless Canadian veterans, contributing causes, and substantive long-term solutions.

None of these issues were identified in Liberal election promises. Also not included was an overhaul of the way veterans have their disability claims adjudicated, reviewed and appealed. I stood beside Louise Richard in the late 1990's, and later Perry Gray joined by CJ Wallace of Veteranvoice.info, calling for comprehensive changes to this demeaning and humiliating process that makes veterans feel more like criminals than honoured Canadians who sacrificed for all of us.

When veterans are inevitably denied or granted insufficient recognition for their injury, they must turn to a review and appeal process, frequently guided by lawyers employed by the very department with which veterans are fighting for benefits. Pre-1995, these lawyers worked in a completely separate and independent agency preparing veterans' claims. That model must be reconsidered.

Meanwhile, VAC lawyers argue cases, often with very little preparation and huge "caseloads", to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, a body that makes pretenses to being judicial, only when it saves money. The Board is notoriously mismanaged and compassionately crippled. This group of politically appointed individuals have their hands and hearts tied by an entrenched bureaucracy that ensures more generous aspects of legislation are quietly kept from veterans' pleading wounds.

These systemic injustices represent a fraction of the tragic to-do list that never made the Liberal promise cut. For those that have, bureaucratic delay and malice have eaten away at their generosity. For instance, increasing veterans' disability income from 75% to 90% of military salary saw many veterans receive 20% raises. The lowest paid veterans, who make up the largest single demographic, received less than 5%. Meanwhile, annual increases have fallen dramatically behind reality. A veteran released today with the same disabilities at the same rank and pay level is earning 30% more than a veteran released 20 years ago.

Veterans Affairs' hard-hearted, stop-gap measures continue to belittle Liberal promises of

“one veteran, one standard”. Benefits are awarded based upon arbitrary dates or heartless criteria, all in order to save money. The Liberal promise to expand upon allowances for the most disabled to recognize lost career prospects, denies the same benefit and its \$1100 monthly supplement to those 1,500 veterans that are declared 100% disabled under the lifelong pension scheme. No career impact benefit or supplement exists for these veterans. Surely if veterans are 100% disabled, their career is impacted.

Families who care for the most disabled also will receive an increase in a caregiver allowance. Whereas family members of veterans with a modest lifelong pension previously were eligible, they will no longer be eligible for the allowance even though no such benefit exists for these family members. For those eligible, \$1000 monthly is grossly inadequate and will force many families to juggle care of the veteran and a career, likely forfeiting eligibility for the benefit. In effect, those family members that work the hardest, even though their careers are often hobbled in caring for a seriously disabled veteran, will be punished the most, or at least benefit the least.

Principal among the promises is the return to lifelong pensions. This will be a huge budget item affecting more than 60,000 veterans costing billions: hence the dilly-dallying. The pension-promise dawdling has allowed both the Liberals and the bureaucrats to slide through other half-promises. Supposedly universal education for non-injured veterans has been restricted to those veterans released after April 1, 2006, with six years or more military service, and denied to the most disabled or on the lowest income support program.

Liberals promised to remove the time limit for survivors of deceased veterans to access education and retraining. For spouses still caring for the most disabled veterans, the bureaucracy nonsensically and callously imposed a two-year limitation to receive career transition help, but only for those veterans released after April 1, 2006.

The bureaucracy controls political agendas, diminishes recognition for service and sacrifice while demeaning veterans and their families through soul-destroying frustration and exclusion.

To address these and many other problems requires authentic and encompassing change. This change necessitates Ministers confront the senior bureaucratic culture head-on. Minister O’Regan commented in the same CBC interview, “We’ve got a lot of good people who are doing good work on behalf of veterans.” If senior bureaucrats are doing “good work”, then by default, culpability lies with veterans in not understanding what “good work” is being done on their behalf. Patronizing veterans is the salient problem, not the solution. Sadly, Minister O’Regan appears ready to reinforce, not resolve the VAC cultural mess.

Sean Bruyee, vice-president of Canadians for Accountability, has a graduate degree in public ethics, is a retired Air Force intelligence officer, and frequent commentator on government, military, and veterans’ issues.

Les premiers mots du ministre O'Regan sonnent des cloches d'alarme: les libéraux doivent faire mieux.

Par Sean Bruyea

Si les premiers commentaires publics du nouveau ministre Seamus O'Regan sont tout à fait pertinents, les vétérans et les libéraux qui gouvernent devraient s'inquiéter. Le gouvernement Trudeau devra bien comprendre les vétérans. Ils devraient également être désireux de faire plus de ce qu'ils ont promis s'ils souhaitent renverser sept décennies de vétérans en isolation et leurs familles en castes et en classes arbitraires.

Le ministre O'Regan dans sa première action annoncée a visité la bureaucratie des Affaires des Anciens Combattants Canada (ACC) à Charlottetown, l'un des seuls ministères fédéraux dont le siège social est situé à l'extérieur d'Ottawa: " J'ai décidé de faire de la priorité absolue, de sortir ici et de rencontrer des gens aussi vite que possible. "

Pour ceux qui ont lutté contre ACC au fil des ans, et parfois des décennies, c'est la bureaucratie supérieure à Charlottetown qui a été la principale source d'une relation souvent dédaigneuse et antagoniste avec les vétérans et leurs familles. Ce n'est pas contraire au traitement paternaliste et hostile d'Ottawa sur les peuples autochtones du Canada. Que le ministre a cru que sa priorité absolue (et première) était la bureaucratie supérieure et non les vétérans, sonne un appel de trompette.

Au cours de sa première visite à Charlottetown, le ministre a été informé de la «priorité absolue» des ratios «cas», car la bureaucratie se réfère au nombre d'anciens combattants gérés par chaque gestionnaire de cas. «J'ai beaucoup à apprendre», a déclaré le ministre O'Regan à CBC: «Je comprends que c'est un gros problème, la question des charges de cas [sic]». D'une manière frustrante, les «cas de travail» ont été la «priorité absolue» pour ACC et ses ministres pendant cinq ans ou plus. Moi et mes collègues avons écrit et parlé sur cette question depuis au moins 2004.

Dans le but de réduire ces taux de cas, les vétérans m'ont dit que les fonctionnaires locaux d'ACC ont retardé des mois pour répondre, se rencontrer et fournir des services de suivi minimaux. Quelquefois, "abandonne" les vétérans pour que d'autres «par cas» puissent être rapidement traités.

Un ministre sincère et un gouvernement sincère doivent s'attaquer à la culture bureaucratique d'ACC. Cela nie qu'il y a un problème, discrédite ceux qui préconisent le changement, licencie les souffrances, les obscurcies, les études, les retards supplémentaires, induit les médias et les vétérans à croire que des mesures sont prises et, finalement, manipule les parties prenantes pour accepter des mesures d'aide à la bande entièrement insuffisante. Le siège de culture d'ACC est loin de la surveillance d'Ottawa, isolé de l'attention des médias nationaux et vivants dans une dimension étrangère à la réalité des vétérans du Canada et de leurs familles.

Pendant ce temps, une foule de problèmes non traités et souvent graves demeurent.

ACC, le ministère chargé de soigner et de traiter les vétérans et leurs familles, n'a commencé qu'à surveiller les suicides des vétérans, mais seulement après que le gouvernement a été honteux par une série d'enquêtes sur les médias. Pendant ce temps, les pionniers vétérans, Louise Richard et Luc Levesque, ont plaidé pour que le gouvernement étudie la question ... il y a plus de 20 ans.

Dans les années 1990, Louise a également demandé au gouvernement de surveiller et d'aider les vétérans sans abri, suivis par Don Leonardo de VétéransCanada (.ca) à partir de 2001. Ce n'était pas jusqu'à l'embarras des médias en 2014 que ACC a rapidement remis un contrat unique pour plus d'un million de dollars avec des objectifs définis douteux et des contrôles de qualité de suivi. Le contrat offre apparemment une aide improvisée pour sélectionner les vétérans abri. Certes, le vérificateur général devrait examiner cela. Pendant ce temps, nous n'avons toujours pas une image précise et complète des vétérans canadiens sans abri, des causes contributives et des solutions substantielles à long terme.

Aucune de ces questions n'a été identifiée dans les promesses électorales libérales. En outre, il n'y a pas eu de révision de la façon dont les vétérans ont leurs revendications d'invalidité jugées, examinées et appelées. Je me suis retrouvé à côté de Louise Richard à la fin des années 1990, et plus tard, Perry Gray a rejoint CJ Wallace de Veteranvoice.info, appelant à des changements complets à ce processus dégradant et humiliant qui fait que les vétérans se sentent plus comme des criminels que des Canadiens honorés qui nous ont sacrifié pour nous tous.

Lorsque les vétérans sont inévitablement niés ou n'ont pas reçu une reconnaissance suffisante pour leur blessure, ils doivent se tourner vers un processus d'examen et d'appel, souvent guidé par des avocats employés par le ministère même avec lesquels les vétérans se battent pour des prestations. Avant 1995, ces avocats travaillaient dans une agence distincte et indépendante qui préparait les réclamations des vétérans. Ce modèle doit être reconsidéré.

Pendant ce temps, les avocats d'ACC plaident en faveur des affaires, souvent avec très peu de préparation et d'énormes cas de travail, au Comité des vétérans (révision et appel), un organisme qui prétend être judiciaire, seulement lorsqu'il économise de l'argent. Le conseil d'administration est notoirement mal géré et paralysé avec compassion. Ce groupe d'individus nommés politiquement a les mains et les cœurs liés par une bureaucratie enracinée qui garantit que les aspects plus généreux de la législation restent silencieusement liés aux plaies impliquant les vétérans.

Ces injustices systémiques représentent une fraction de la liste des tâches tragiques qui n'a jamais réduit la promesse libérale. Pour ceux qui ont le retard bureaucratique et la malice ont mangé à leur générosité. Par exemple, l'augmentation du revenu d'invalidité des vétérans de 75% à 90% du salaire militaire a vu de nombreux vétérans recevoir des

augmentations de 20%. Les vétérans les moins payés, qui constituent le plus grand démographique individuel, ont reçu moins de 5%. Pendant ce temps, les hausses annuelles ont considérablement diminué la réalité. Un vétérans libéré aujourd'hui avec les mêmes handicaps au même niveau et niveau de rémunération gagne 30% de plus qu'un vétéran libéré il y a 20 ans.

Les mesures d'arrêt et les lacunes d'ACC continuent de minimiser les promesses libérales « un vétéran, une norme ». Les avantages sont accordés en fonction de dates arbitraires ou de critères sans coeur, tout en économisant de l'argent. La promesse libérale visant à élargir les indemnités pour les personnes les plus handicapées pour reconnaître les perspectives de carrière perdue, nie le même avantage et son supplément mensuel de 1100 \$ aux 1 500 vétérans qui sont déclarés 100% handicapés dans le cadre du régime de retraite à vie. Il n'existe aucun avantage ni supplément de carrière pour ces vétérans. Certes, si les vétérans sont 100% handicapés, leur carrière est touchée.

Les familles qui s'occupent des plus handicapés recevront également une augmentation de l'allocation pour aidant naturels. Alors que les membres de la famille des vétérans ayant une retraite modeste à vie auparavant étaient admissibles, ils ne seront plus admissibles à l'allocation même si aucun de ces membres de la famille n'existe. Pour les personnes admissibles, 1000 \$ mensuel est largement insuffisant et forcera de nombreuses familles à jongler avec les soins du vétéran et une carrière, ce qui risque de perdre l'admissibilité au bénéfice. En effet, les membres de la famille qui travaillent le plus fort, même si leurs carrières sont souvent occupées à prendre soin d'un vétéran gravement handicapé, seront les plus punis ou au moins en bénéficieront le moins.

Le principal des promesses est le retour aux pensions de vie. Ce sera un énorme élément budgétaire qui affectera plus de 60 000 anciens combattants qui coûtent des milliards: d'où le décalage.

La promiscuité des pensions a permis aux libéraux et aux bureaucrates de glisser à travers d'autres demi-promesses. L'éducation universelle supposée pour les vétérans non blessés a été limitée aux vétérans libérés après le 1er avril 2006, avec six ans ou plus de service militaire, et refusé aux personnes les plus handicapées ou au programme de soutien du revenu le plus bas.

Les libéraux ont promis de supprimer le délai pour les survivants des vétérans décédés d'accéder à l'éducation et au recyclage. Pour les conjoints qui s'occupent toujours des vétérans les plus handicapés, la bureaucratie sans scrupule et insensément imposé une limitation de deux ans pour recevoir une aide à la transition de carrière, mais seulement pour les vétérans libérés après le 1er avril 2006.

La bureaucratie contrôle les agendas politiques, diminue la reconnaissance du service et du sacrifice tout en dégradant les vétérans et leurs familles grâce à la frustration et à l'exclusion qui détruisent les âmes.

Répondre à ces problèmes et à d'autres problèmes nécessite des changements

authentiques et englobants. Cette modification oblige les ministres à faire face à la haute culture bureaucratique de front. Le ministre O'Regan a commenté dans la même interview de la SRC: «Nous avons beaucoup de bonnes personnes qui font un bon travail au nom des vétérans». Si les hauts fonctionnaires font du «bon travail», par défaut, la culpabilité incombe aux vétérans de ne pas comprendre ce que le «bon travail» fait en leur nom. Patroniser les vétérans est le principal problème, pas la solution. Malheureusement, le ministre O'Regan semble prêt à renforcer, ne pas résoudre le désordre culturel d'ACC.

For a copy of the original article on the Hill Times website, please click here (may require subscription)

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You Can Help!




All veterans are encouraged to pass information, opinions, links to self-help sites onto VVi. VeteranVoice.info is a distribution centre and we are dependant on others to pass information. This is your site. Tell other veterans about your site.

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VVi CSAT Forum

<http://csat.top-talk.net/>



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**Veteran's Aide
Memoire**

http://veteranvoice.info/archive/aide_memoire/Vet_Aide_Memoire.pdf



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(MFT)**

<https://mftgroup.ca/>

**National (US) Gulf War
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<http://www.ngwrc.org/>



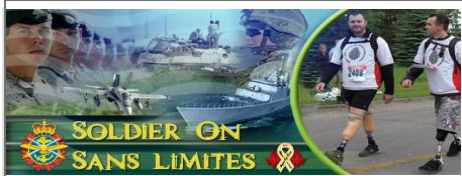
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<http://vpp.ppcliassoc.ca>

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Veterans Affairs Canada Anciens Combattants Canada

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/>

V.E.T.S
Veterans Emergency
Transition Services

<http://www.vetscanada.org/>



Veterans Ombudsman Ombudsman des vétérans

<http://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/>



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<http://veteransofcanada.ca/>



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