

(2) That the formula for compensation payable to former prisoners of war of the Japanese be changed to provide that each such former prisoner of war will receive compensation equivalent to 50 per cent pension to which will be added the amount of pension payable under the Pension Act on account of his assessed disability to a maximum total of 100 per cent—

(3) The prisoners of war of other powers of World War II or who were captured by hostile forces subsequent to World War II be awarded compensation in accordance with the following schedule:

Incarcerated 0-1½ years	10 per cent
Incarcerated 1½-2½ years	15 per cent
Incarcerated 2½ years or over	20 per cent

To this compensation would be added the amount of pension payable under the Pension Act on account of an assessed pensionable disability to a maximum total of 100 per cent.

With regard to the widows of pensioners the committee recommended as follows:

When at the time of death of the prisoner he was, or would have been in receipt of a pension assessed at 47 per cent or less, that pension be paid to the widow in double proportion to the assessed degree of the prisoner's disability as it relates to the basic pension granted to widows.

At the present time a full widow's pension is paid when the pensioner's death was attributable to or was incurred during wartime military service, or in the case of peacetime forces if it arose out of or was directly connected with service; or when the pensioner's disability was assessed at 48 per cent or more at the time of death. The effect of this would be that because 100 per cent widow's pension is payable when the disability pensioner was paid pension at the 50 per cent rate, a double proportion would be payable if his disability was assessed at a lesser rate, so that, for example, the widow of a 40 per cent pensioner would be awarded 80 per cent of the normal widow's pension.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre brought this matter to the minister's attention. The only matter of contention that I have to relate tonight, Madam Speaker, is that time is of the essence, and while I agree with my colleague in addressing a point to the minister, that he was as anxious as we on the standing committee were to make sure that this legislation is introduced immediately, I say that we have heard these stories before. I noted with interest today that the government House leader indicated progress in cabinet with the review of the recommendations, but I have also heard the House leader say the same things before with regard to veterans affairs.

● (2220)

Strangely enough, every prisoner of war association across the country is depending on the members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs to come through with this bill. We on the standing committee can only try to impress on the minister and his government that any delays in introducing this legislation will again result in a lack of faith by veterans' organizations across the country. I am sure that I can promise on behalf of my party that the legislation would go through all stages in record time and that it would receive co-operation from all parties on this side.

I watch with interest the many speeches the minister makes to veterans organizations across this country.

Adjournment Motion

During the summer recess when members of parliament were supposed to be on holiday, I too made speeches to veterans' organizations. The first thing they say, whether they be former prisoners of war or not, is that it is imperative that this legislation be introduced as soon as possible.

While the recommendations are all vital to show our support of prisoners of war, the most vital have to do with widows' pensions and widows who are restricted from receiving a pension if their husband was receiving less than 48 per cent. This section in particular is discriminatory, stupid and ridiculous because it is these widows who most need the help.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. S. Victor Raiton (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to speak on behalf of the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) to reply to the question by the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) requesting a bill relating to Canadian prisoners of war in Europe and Hong Kong.

Hon. members will recall that the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs at its meeting of June 22, 1972, requested that a study be undertaken to identify any physiological or psychological long-term effects which their incarceration may have had on ex-prisoners of war of the European theatre, numbering approximately 7,500. The government accepted this recommendation and on January 31, 1973, the study was undertaken by Dr. J. Douglas Hermann, a distinguished Canadian surgeon. Dr. Hermann's report was tabled in the House of Commons on Monday, November 18, 1974. It was subsequently referred to the standing committee for study on Wednesday, March 26, 1975, and the committee reported back to the House on Thursday, June 12, 1975.

I ask the hon. member to listen carefully to the last paragraph because couched in its terms he might find some of the answers he is seeking.

In the meantime the Minister of Veterans Affairs has held consultations on this very important subject with his colleagues. At the present time this, along with other government proposals, must be examined carefully in the light of the recently announced guidelines. The minister would hope, therefore, that the request for compensation for ex-POW will not become a victim of our financial restrictions.

As hon. members are aware, the House leader referred to this in the House today. I would like to be more positive, but neither the minister nor I can give the hon. member any further information except that the matter is under close consideration.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10:27 p.m.