

from time to time were more lengthy and went into more detail. This is not an attempt to deal with the whole Hong Kong veterans situation, but rather to deal with the points raised in the resolution passed at our Dominion Convention a month ago in Montreal.

To the Standing Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Commons, the Royal Canadian Legion's 21st Dominion Convention 1966, Resolution concerning pension status of Hong Kong Veterans. Mr. Chairman and members, the Royal Canadian Legion is pleased to have this opportunity to appear before you to express its views regarding the pension position of Hong Kong veterans. Our letter to the Chairman of this Committee, Mr. Gerald Laniel, M. P., dated May 17, provided a copy of a resolution which was approved by our convention in Montreal last month. It reads as follows:

WHEREAS the Pension Act defines disability as the loss or lessening of the power to will and to do any normal mental or physical act; and

WHEREAS 20 years after the liberation of the Hong Kong prisoners of war from 42 months' captivity there is conclusive evidence of the nature and course of some of their disabilities, for example, optic atrophy, neurological disorders, et cetera; and

WHEREAS there is also impressive evidence, though perhaps not wholly conclusive, of widespread gastrointestinal, neuromuscular, cardiovascular and nervous symptoms and fatigue; and

WHEREAS the report of the medical adviser of the Pension Commission recently published states that a fairly large proportion of these former prisoners receive disability pensions not commensurate with the evidence of disability and the present understanding of it:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT—

- (1) an award of a minimum of 50 per cent for the residual effects of their imprisonment be paid to every ex-Japanese prisoner of war of World War II,
- (2) where ex-Japanese prisoners of war have died since release from captivity and their widows have not been granted pension, steps be taken to make awards on the basis that death was service-related,
- (3) arrangements be made for yearly pension medical examination for all ex-Japanese prisoners of war.

Before proceeding to outline the views of the Royal Canadian Legion which led to the passing of the resolution in question, we would like to pay tribute to Dr. H. J. Richardson of the Canadian Pension Commission, for the work which he has undertaken in an effort to throw more light on the disabilities and problems of those veterans who were prisoners of war in Japanese hands during the 1939-45 war.

We believe that because of the inadequate medical knowledge of the after effects of this type of imprisonment the majority of ex-prisoners have been short-changed in the pensions that have been paid to them since their service. The Pension Commission, acting in good faith on the facts available in the years since the war, has been inclined in approaching the problems of this group, to use the same yardstick as was used in dealing with claims from veterans suffering from well-defined conditions arising from normal service in Canada or