

Prisoners of War

by a group of non-specialized workers within the public service of Canada. As you certainly know, Mr. Speaker, a 7.2 per cent increase was granted on January 1 in view of the consumer price index increase. In spite of this, the basic rate is still \$240 less than the average yearly wages of the non-specialized employee group of the public service of Canada after deduction of all income tax.

In my humble opinion, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the present Canadian legislation for veterans is the best in the world if we consider that in the United States, the compensation rate for 100 per cent disability was \$707 a month, or \$8,484 a year, on January 1, 1977, which virtually means that an American veteran with 100 per cent disability received \$1,805 more a year than a Canadian veteran. This shows that the American legislation gives a basic compensation guarantee of 25 per cent more than the disability pension granted to Canadian veterans.

Mr. Speaker, all I want is for those people to live happy lives. I have asked the minister to consider also the category of veterans of the second world war who must also pay more for what they buy in view of current inflation.

I hope in closing that the Minister of Veterans Affairs will examine this matter and introduce a bill as soon as possible to help the veterans, like he has done this afternoon.

● (1802)

[*English*]

Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, this is a good day upon which to put this bill through. I believe it is St. David's day. I have no hesitation whatsoever in supporting this bill which has been introduced by the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald). We see today that when good men of goodwill want to work together, they can work together for

the good of those who are in need. An example which all of us can follow is being set. I commend the minister and hon. members in all parties who are co-operating in getting this bill through all stages. I trust that the minister will receive the necessary support from the cabinet for even further amendments to veterans legislation in the very near future.

That is all I have to say. I have not had equal time, just sufficient time.

Hon. Stanley Haidasz (Parkdale): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to make a few remarks about these amendments to the Compensation for Former Prisoners of War Act. I congratulate and commend the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) for bringing in these amendments which provide benefits for veterans and escapees of World War I as well as those of World War II. I thank all hon. members for their support of my motion in this House on February 10 asking the minister to consider in the future that this bill apply to all Canadian citizens who were prisoners of war or escapees in World War I and World War II.

I think today when human rights acts are being proclaimed we should do everything we can to extend fair and equal treatment to all Canadian citizens. If possible, I urge the minister in the very near future to bring in additional amendments to include all Canadian citizens who were prisoners of war or escapees in World War I and World War II.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, read the third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being after six o'clock this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At 6.08 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.