

corrected. He has lobbied me, as his Member of Parliament, to put this motion forward, as I have done. By good fortune it was drawn to be debated. Mr. Bray has also lobbied the Canadian Legion which has passed a motion that I will read shortly.

The best way to explain what we are trying to do through this motion is to read a letter which I wrote on March 9 of this year to the Member for Burlington (Mr. Kempling) who is the chairman of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Business. The Hon. Member for Burlington is himself a distinguished war veteran who served in the Burma campaign. The letter reads:

Dear Mr. Kempling:

Re: Notice of Motion

I would like the Committee to rule in favour of having my Motion concerning amendments to the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act be made a votable motion.

The issue is a nonpartisan one. Essentially, if an amendment such as I propose were made to the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act, Canadian Merchant Seamen who made at least one, and maybe several, trips through dangerous waters during wartime, would be eligible for the Civilian War Pension and Allowance. At present, a Merchant Seaman must have served at sea for at least six months in order to qualify. The law as it stands at present is inequitable, as many Merchant Seamen did serve in close assistance with the military during the war, and travelled through dangerous waters many times during a period less than six months. On the other hand, there are other seamen who did serve at sea for the period longer than six months, but who only travelled once through dangerous waters, and who, by this fact, do qualify under the Act.

In other words, those merchant seamen who travelled through dangerous waters once or many times do not qualify for the pension if they did not serve for a total of six months whereas other merchant seamen who may have only travelled through dangerous waters once but served for more than six months, do qualify. We, Mr. Bray, and the Legion, think this is inequitable.

The letter continues:

My amendment to the Act would serve to remedy the existing inequities in the law.

The Pacific Command of the Royal Canadian Legion is very concerned about this matter, and has written me with respect to this issue.

I look forward to a positive ruling by the Committee on this matter.

I would like to read a letter written to me by Mr. Bray on March 1 of this year. It is actually a copy of a letter he wrote to the Hon. George Hees, P.C., M.P., Minister of Veterans Affairs. It reads:

Dear Mr. Hees:

BRAY JOHN M. A4924/V6523 & C.W.A. 8220741 Ex. Canadian Merchant Navy.

• (1430)

Those are the identification numbers. It goes on:

Dear Sir:

In the case of Merchant Seaman I feel that they should not come under the Civilian War Allowances Act for the following reasons.

(1) It was obligatory to take Gunnery courses etc. and had to man the Guns in event of enemy attack. As most Merchant ships were crewed with only 8

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Naval Personnel (D.E.M.S.) and that these ships were equipped with 2-12 Pounders or 4-inch heavy guns, 8-20 MMOrlikons and 1 set of Rockets plus Browning & Lewis Machine Guns. It is very evident that the Merchant crews had to man them.

In other words, there were guns on the merchant ships and they had to know how to man them.

It continues:

(2) At cessation of War in a Zone did not negate the dangers as there was always the possibility of Mines and danger of accidents with the Ammunition on board, until they were stripped after arriving back in their home port.

(3) In the case of the armed forces, their time was considered from Enlistment to Discharge. I think that the Merchant Seamen should be afforded the same consideration as the rest of the armed forces that handled Guns and Ammunition also Fuel & Oil.

(4) Seamen especially Canadian Seamen should be at least covered until their arrival back to their home port or until the ship was denuded of all Ammunition & Armament.

So hopefully you can see your way clear to alter the existing Act to include the Merchant Navy as actual Armed Forces personnel and give them their just due. Thanking you.

It is signed: "J.M. Bray".

I think what Mr. Bray meant in his first paragraph is that there is an inequitable situation in which one group of seamen is covered and another group is not.

Let me quote the Royal Canadian Legion Dominion Convention Resolution of 1986. It states:

12. Merchant Navy Eligibility

WHEREAS Subsections 75(1) and 75(2) of the War Pensions and Allowances Act, stipulate that a Canadian Merchant Seaman, to be eligible for the Civilian War Pensions and Allowance must have served at sea for a period of six months, and during that period at sea, made at least one trip through dangerous waters; and

WHEREAS during a lesser period than six months, a Merchant Seaman may have made numerous trips through dangerous waters:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Subsections 75(1) and 75(2) be amended so that one trip through dangerous waters would be the only qualification necessary for Civilian War Allowance on the part of Canadian Merchant Seaman.

There was a response from the Department which deals with the fact that the qualifying period was established to correspond with the service time that was required by merchant seamen for the receipt of war medals, such as the 1939-45 Star of the Atlantic and Pacific Star. Thus, to qualify for the allowance, this length of service was considered to be the minimum time requirement for civilians who served in close support of the Armed Forces during wartime.

In my view, that is a bureaucratic response. While medals are important, pensions for veterans are needed. I see at the table Stanley Knowles, the former Member from Winnipeg, who fought many years in the House for pensions and managed to get the Government and bureaucrats to change their minds on numerous occasions. I say to Mr. Knowles and the Government that the purpose of this motion is to try to get the Veterans Department, under the very able and excellent Minister, the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Hees), to look at this again and change the inequity for those merchant