

## OFFICIAL RESPONSES

## ANNEX E

24. Merchant Seamen were called a non-uniformed service, but when returned POWs were refused a job at sea, they could not get a priority certificate to buy a civilian suit to look for a job ashore. However, they could get priority to buy a Merchant Navy uniform to go back to sea!

25. The provision of benefits was often handled ineptly. Internees were said to be eligible for the special bonus. It too depended upon belonging to a Merchant Seamen Manning Pool. Many of them were declared ineligible until mid 1946. It was only then that Transport decided that they needn't comply because the Pools had not been organized at the time they were captured.

26. Seamen on low paying allied ships were advised that they could have their pay supplemented to Canadian rates. Transport had already made the income calculations for the special bonus for all and in some cases the rates were a fraction of the Canadian rates. Over 45 percent of Canadian nationals, who were Merchant Navy POWs, served on Allied ships of non-Canadian registry. Nevertheless, 10 May 1948, the Canadian Pension Commission advised a seamen that, ". . . the Commission are of the opinion that the detention allowances granted you are greater than could be authorized under the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act." Note that the Commission neither recognized the Transport calculations nor did any of their own.

27. There was a readiness to grant the doubt of the benefit, not the benefit of the doubt. The Civil Service was being staffed by veterans who had monopolized the opportunities through Veteran's Preference. Even the Transport Registry of Merchant Seamen could not hire a merchant seaman. That left Merchant Seamen with few friends in influential places. The attitude is changing and substantial support is being received from the Royal Canadian Legion and other non-government organizations.