

has any Canadian government extended to them the recognition they deserve as war veterans.

I want to say that the Canadians who served in the Republican forces were in no way comparable to the Canadians who joined the U.S. military to fight the war in Vietnam. Those who helped the U.S. in Vietnam were not defending a democratically elected government, instead, they were helping a superpower invade a small nation.

Mr. Speaker, no Canadian government has granted war veterans' status to merchant seamen. I will have more to say about that when we get to the bill at second reading stage. But I want to say of the sailors in Canada's merchant marine who sailed in dangerous waters for the allied cause during World War II, that without the supplies and ordinances merchant seamen brought from Canada to Europe, Canadian and other allied forces would have been helpless to defeat fascism.

There were more combat fatalities among the merchant seamen during World War II than there were in the Royal Canadian Navy, and many merchant seamen were captured and held as prisoners of war, in some cases for up to five years. Yet when World War II ended, the merchant seamen who had risked so much and had contributed so greatly to the war effort did not receive the benefits received by regular sailors, soldiers and airmen.

I am sure very few Canadians know today about another piece of our history that I must mention, and that is what our First Nations did in Canada's first overseas military expedition, which was the Nile expedition of 1884-85. It was Canada's first overseas military campaign. It was also the first time that Canadian Indians volunteered for an overseas war. General Wolseley, who put down the Red River Rebellion, was so impressed with the expertise of the Indians as voyageurs, he recruited some of them to help the relief expedition up the Nile.

• (1540)

Fifty-six Mohawks and 30 Ojibwas were given a non-combatative role as voyageurs to transport a British expedition up the Nile River to rescue General C.G. Gordon at Khartoum.

Sixteen members of the contingent of First Nations died in the expedition from drowning, disease or combat

engagement. All the voyageurs were decorated for their service in Egypt, but we owe it to their memory to specifically praise their service on this occasion.

A memorial cross at Fort William Mission testifies to their contribution to our history. And of course we owe it to the memory of those who were first here and first to serve to see to it that their descendants, Canada's First Nations of today, are at last allowed the dignity which comes with control of their own affairs, which is surely their right.

Finally, Sir, I want to remind the House of something I said last year on this occasion. At that time I suggested the best way for Canada to remember her war dead was to do its best to make and keep the peace. This is a point I would want to make again.

We could be at war again soon. It is my hope that we as a nation will do all that we can to keep the peace. If we must go to war to stop aggression, it must only be done under the auspices of the United Nations. In the war which may come there will be no victors. And if the human species is to survive, we must learn never again to make war.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** As a symbolic gesture I would appreciate if hon. members would rise with me for a one minute silence.

*[Editor's Note: The House stood in silence.]*

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre—Government Information Systems; the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier—The Citizens' Forum on the Future of Canada; the hon. member for Nunatsiak—Indian Affairs.

---

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

*[Translation]*

### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACT

#### MEASURE TO AMEND

**Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs)** moved that Bill C-87, an Act to amend the statute law in relation to war veterans, be read the second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.