

*Veterans Affairs Committee Report*

landing in Normandy towards the end of the last world war. That celebration, commemorating the 25th anniversary of that landing, was organized by the Department of Veterans Affairs in co-operation with the Department of External Affairs.

The reports submitted so far by all those who were present were most laudatory. They congratulated us, even saying that the Canadian ceremonies were, by far, more significant and impressive than those of our allies.

The hon. member who first took the floor complained that there were not enough ceremonies in English whereas the hon. member who has just resumed his seat complains that there were not enough in French.

I therefore believe we have struck the right balance. This is a striking example of the difficulty of achieving true national unity in Canada.

That is understandable, because people, instead of using their heads, their common sense, often give way to their passions.

When people complain, on the one side that there was not enough English, and on the other not enough French, there is every reason to believe that the Department of Veterans Affairs struck, as I said, a happy medium and respected quite well the ethnic composition of the country.

May I call it one o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It being one o'clock I do now leave the Chair until 2 p.m.

At one o'clock the house took recess.

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#### AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 2 p.m.

**Mr. Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), after discussing the Bény-sur-Mer ceremonies, discussed the needs of our war veterans. In his opinion, if I recall correctly, he claimed there was a creeping paralysis and a total indifference on the part of our government. He also stated that the attitude of the government was to ignore the requests of the veterans and of members of the house. Then he dealt more particularly with the need for pension increases, implying that very little had been done in the field of pensions on this side of the house.

[Mr. Dubé.]

Perhaps in a very friendly way I should refresh the memory of the hon. member. Of course we all know or should know that pensions were first implemented after the first war in 1919. At the time the basis of the payment was the assessment of disability based on the requirement for enlistment, that is, that a person had a healthy mind and a healthy body. The pension rates established in 1919 were composed of a basic rate and a bonus because of the abnormal economic situation. The bonus was increased in 1920 and in 1925 was absorbed into the basic pension. Throughout the dark years, the 1930's—and they were not exactly known as Liberal years—no increases were made in the basic rates. Of course none were made during the war years.

In 1948, however, pension rates were increased from \$900 a year for a single pensioner to \$1,128 a year. In 1952 they were increased to \$1,500 a year. In 1957 they were increased to \$1,800 a year. In 1961—and I salute my hon. friend—they were increased from \$1,800 a year to \$2,160 a year. In 1964 they were increased to \$2,500 a year. Two years later in 1966 they were increased again to \$2,760 a year and finally last year, 1968, there was another healthy increase of 15 per cent to \$3,180 a year for a single veteran and more of course for a married veteran. In other words, between 1960 and 1968 disability pensions increased from \$1,800 to \$3,180 for single veterans. This takes in three rapid increases in the years 1964, 1966 and 1968. I for one would not call this creeping paralysis or total indifference.

Of course the cost of living is going up and these rates are always under review. At the present time they are under review in conjunction with a number of other types of payments made to Canadians by the federal government, as indicated by the Prime Minister on June 17. At that time he stated:

We have to review all aspects of social legislation. We are doing this; we do not want to settle special cases. A special plea can be made not only for the veterans but for old people, for retired civil servants and for all sections of people in society.

Although we are always looking forward to improving the lot of our war pensioners, this is no reason for us to belittle our present record. As a matter of fact veterans in Canada and all of us agree that Canada stands second to none in her treatment of war veterans.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.