

merchant seamen who died of enemy action in Canadian armed conflicts and, further, that suitable monuments to their sacrifices be erected.

Recommendation No. 4 has to do with the Canadian veterans who decided, as was their right, to live in a foreign country after the war. The recommendation in that regard includes, first:

That the residency requirement of the War Veterans Allowance Act and Part XI of the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act be amended to permit otherwise qualified veterans to apply for benefits from outside of Canada;

and secondly,

That the Canadian government take immediate steps to negotiate an agreement with the United Kingdom to exempt War Veterans Allowance from British taxes.

There are hundreds of Canadian veterans still remaining over there, many living in poverty. Canada refuses to help them, and hides behind this residency restriction, which forces them to come back to Canada for 12 months when they are in their 70s and 80s. It is not fair.

Dealing with the prisoners of war, the next recommendation is:

6. That the rates of compensation provided for under the Prisoners of War Compensation Act be reviewed with the objective of taking into account the severity of the POW regime forced on veterans by the award of additional compensation for each month deemed extremely severe and that two additional categories be added at appropriate rates of compensation for those veterans who served 30 months and more as prisoner of war.

When honourable senators read the report, they will understand what that means.

The next recommendation is:

That, for the purposes of establishing entitlement to Veterans Independence Program benefits, receipt of prisoner of war compensation be treated as proof of undiagnosed medical disability.

Honourable senators, if anyone is paying attention, I want to remind him that at this time, when the government is concerned, and rightly so, about young Canadians overseas, our prisoners of war today are not entitled, unless they have a disability, to the Veterans Independence Program, even if they have fulfilled all the requirements. That is the reason why I feel some of these anomalies are so important today and the reason why we called the report "It's Almost Too Late".

Recommendations eight and nine are as follows:

8. That the Veterans Independence Program immediately be extended to civilians who served in close support of the wartime armed forces, that is, as enumerated in Part XI of the *Civilian War Pension and Allowances Act*, and that these benefits be comparable to those offered military veterans; and

9. That the cuts to the heavy housekeeping component of the Veterans Independence Program be fully restored.

I have only a couple more, senators. The next recommendation states:

10. That the *Veterans Allowance Act* be amended:

1. To establish a common age at which both men and women qualify for benefits and that this common age be 55 years old;

This recommendation tries to overcome an anomaly in the act. When the act was revised to include female veterans, due to the fact jobs were hard to find they lowered the age of qualification for the war veterans allowance to 55. Today there still are veterans who have to wait until they are 60, and I feel it would be only right, under the Charter, to equate the ages for both male and female veterans.

Recommendation No. 11 states:

11. That the Pension Commission give careful consideration to the psychological problems which may arise when the stresses of retiring and aging are combined with those of blindness, and that these problems influence the assessment of applications for exceptional incapacity.

The president of the Sir Arthur Pearson War Blinded Association appeared as a witness before the committee, and he made a strong case. Again I remind honourable senators that 50 years after World War II it is only now that the Canadian Pension Commission is considering extending exceptional incapacity to the war blinded because of their situation as they grow older.

This recommendation is prophetic to what is happening today. Recommendation No. 12 states:

12. That peacetime service personnel pensioned under the Special Duty Area Pension Order be eligible for Veterans Independence Program benefits.

The recommendation has to do with those who were serving in peacekeeping forces and who served after the war in Europe and around the world on behalf of Canada as a special duty. There is an order to cover their benefits under the Pension Act. On the news today it was said that the wives of veterans at the Trenton Air Force Base were visited by the Minister of National Defence and were assured that they would be entitled to pensions, allowances, benefits and care. As a matter of fact, in connection with the reference to the committee, we are going to deal with that problem.

On the last page of our report we advise that:

The Sub-committee on Veterans Affairs will be examining this Special Duty Order in its new mandate, the "Veterans Health Care Regulations"... to ascertain the benefits, services and care to which armed forces personnel, in all categories should be entitled.

One of the witnesses brought to the fore the fact that if veterans need care in a home, they are not entitled to it under the Veterans Independence Program.

Honourable senators, that is a short version of the contents of the committee's report. I would like to give one example of a