

Your Committee is grateful to The Honourable John Turner, Minister of Justice, and to Mr. D. S. Maxwell, Deputy Minister, for the services of Mr. P. E. Reynolds, Director of Legal Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, who was loaned to the Committee as Director of Research and Special Assistant.

Your Committee wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to Mr. Reynolds who so greatly assisted the Committee in the performance of its duties, and to Mr. Del Levesque who served the Committee as Clerk, and to Mr. D. K. Ward, Chief Pensions Advocate, for his excellent explanation of the White Paper proposals.

In view therefore of the present status of, and having completed its inquiry pursuant to the said Order of Reference, your Committee reports:

Your Committee examined in detail each of the 148 recommendations of the Woods Committee, and also the proposals contained in the White Paper on Veterans Pensions.

Many of the recommendations did not involve legislative changes, and indeed a number were not controversial, being acceptable to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Canadian Pension Commission as well as to veterans' spokesmen. In regard to those recommendations on which some differences were noted in testimony, your Committee has suggestions for your consideration.

The Government's White Paper on Veterans Pensions was of great assistance in reducing the work of your Committee. Many of the proposals contained in it were welcomed by spokesmen for all veterans groups. These included the provisions affecting Hong Kong veterans, the clarification of the "benefit of doubt", the proposal to restructure the Veterans' Bureau, and the modification of the Pension Act in respect of legal damages. Your Committee is pleased to endorse these proposals, with some minor changes. These will require new legislation which it is hoped will be introduced in Parliament as soon as possible.

In respect of other areas, on which disagreement was noted, your Committee has a number of suggestions for consideration.

One of the items that recurred throughout our hearing related to the basis for determining the monetary quantum of 100% disability pension. The Woods Report (Recommendation 63) recommended that the pension rate should continue to be related to the earning power of an untrained labourer. Spokesmen for veterans groups alleged that since World War I the pension rate had always been related to the Salary of a Cleaner and Helper in the Public Service and should continue to be. Representations made to the Woods Committee alleged that adjustments to the basic pension rate had actually been made from time to time which had the result of bringing it up to Cleaner and Helper rate.

The Committee was unanimous in expressing the opinion that the pension rate should continue to be related to the earning power of an untrained labourer.

The case for additional pension for those severely disabled or suffering from multiple disabilities was very strong. In particular, some witnesses who appeared before the Committee gave evidence of hardship in their own family living because of the limited income available to them. However, because of the concern for the integrity of the principle of assessing a man's disability on his ability to compete in the untrained labour market, many members of the Committee had difficulty in subscribing to the concept of going beyond 100% in measuring physical disability.