

House that in a matter of days this situation would be rectified. Therefore, I ask him at this time what proposals he has to support the answer he gave me in the House on January 9, almost one month ago, and I look to him for that answer at this time.

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member's question may I say that under the Pension Act pensions are paid in respect of members of the forces who have been disabled or died as a result of military service. At the present time the Canadian Pension Commission is paying pensions for disability to over 19,000 World War I veterans and over 12,000 of their widows. They are also paying over 1,000 disability claims to World War II veterans and to some 15,000 widows whose husbands' deaths related to that war. All told, there are over 150,000 persons receiving pensions related directly to injuries or death as a result of military service for this country.

World War II has been over for some 27 years, and World War I for over 54 years, but even now claims are being received at the rate of about 700 a month. The Pension Act was amended in the spring of 1971 and it provided many new extended benefits and has given many veterans or their dependants the opportunity to reapply for pension. The Canadian Pension Commission is dealing with these claims as rapidly and as sympathetically as possible. Members of the House will be interested to know that although the number of claims awaiting adjudication reached a peak of almost 9,600 by the end of 1972, the first reduction in the backlog was made in January so that there are now just under 9,400 on hand. This is the figure I was looking for when I told the hon. member I hoped I would have a more favourable report. So I am glad it has turned out this way.

One area in which there has been a good deal of interest lately is the basic rate of pension. Rates in the past have been set from time to time. Last year the government introduced a cost of living feature so that pension rates increased with the increase in the cost of living. The veterans' organizations were pleased with this but felt that the basic rate itself was too low. As a result, a study group was established jointly by the veterans' organizations and officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Canadian Pension Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. A. O. Solomon. This group has now issued a report which was tabled in the House last week and which, briefly, recommends that the basic rate payable to a single, 100 per cent pensioner be related to the earning power of the single public servant. In doing this they took five categories and worked out an average take-home pay. They also recommended that the married pensioner should receive an additional 25 per cent—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the minister, but the time allotted to him has expired.

HARBOURS—TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATION OF SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS TO DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, on January 16, as recorded at page 333 of *Hansard*, I

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asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) the following question:

Has responsibility for the administration of small craft harbours been transferred from his department? If so, when, and under what authority?

The Minister of Transport was somewhat vague in his reply so I transferred my question to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) who responded as follows:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Responsibility for the administration of small craft harbours was transferred from the Department of Transport to the Department of the Environment in March of last year.

I was somewhat surprised by this answer, although in fairness I should say I was aware that some such idea was under consideration as a result of having been provided by the office of the Minister of the Environment shortly before the 1972 summer recess and the subsequent general election with a couple of documents. One is entitled "Interdepartmental task force on small craft harbours". In it, the following terms of reference are set out:

By cabinet document, No. 766-71 dated July 12, 1971 the cabinet committee on priorities and planning agreed under section (f) of this decision that a report on small craft harbours be prepared by the Minister of the Environment in consultation with the Privy Council office—

The terms of reference include some principles and guidelines one of which is a definition of small craft harbours as follows:

That small craft harbour be defined . . . as any sheltered area of navigable water, natural or artificial, where small craft may be moored or berthed and where the harbour's present primary use is one of or combination of commercial fishing, recreational sport fishing and pleasure craft activities.

• (2210)

Second, I would like to state that a small craft harbour may exist either at a separate dock contained entity or as a part of a larger multipurpose harbour. The second document I have is headed "A listing of the 131 small craft harbours in the Province of British Columbia presently vested with the Ministry of Transport and subject to further transfer considerations under the terms of reference of the inventory review—phase II."

The date of that report is April 17, 1972, and as I understood it the transfer considerations and the fact that the listing of harbours was presently under the ministry of transport made it clear, at least to me, that this was a matter under discussion and consideration within the councils of this government. Certainly my impression was that no such transfer had taken place, yet the minister said on January 16 that this transfer had in fact taken place in March. I find this puzzling to say the least.

The interdepartmental task force had another item under its principles and guidelines to which I would like to draw the attention of the House. It reads:

That small craft harbour component marine facilities be functionally considered in context of an integrated harbour system.

This led me to make an analysis of the harbours in British Columbia with which I am most familiar. Of the 131 harbours listed in this document, 53 are in Comox-Alberni. Because of some knowledge of those establishments I have had a look at them in relation to the criteria that were set forth. Of the 53 locations, I classify only 15 as exclusively fishing and/or pleasure harbours and only