

*Army Benevolent Fund Act and Related Acts*

No allowance or costs shall be paid under this Act in respect of any student whose education has been interrupted by 15 months or more immediately before entering an educational institution.

I take it there is a ministerial discretion here. "Or more" could be read to mean more than 15 months. In the French text the following is indicated very clearly:

[*Translation*]

I will read Clause 4 in French:

... qui interrompt son éducation ou instruction pour plus de quinze mois ...

So there is an indication that it must be more than fifteen months. Is this left to ministerial discretion?

[*English*]

Does the Minister have that kind of discretion? If so, where do we find it in the Act? Is there a provision for that?

**Mr. Hees:** The answer is that it does not appear in the Act. I think the Hon. Member has made a suggestion which deserves consideration. If for some reason such as sickness or something of that kind it is impossible for a student to take advantage of this provision for longer than 15 months, I think the Minister should have ministerial leeway. I think I will recommend that we have that in the future.

Clause agreed to.

On Clause 5—

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Speaker, would the Minister elaborate on the phrase "where he was an evader" and educate the House in terms of the meaning of that particular phrase in Clause 5?

• (1740)

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Chairman, that was put in the Act to cover a prisoner of war who was smart enough to break out of a prisoner of war camp and be an evader for some period, the longer the better and hopefully get back to our own lines, and that time would be added to his prisoner of war time. He would not in any way be penalized for his ingenuity in being able to break out of a camp and be an evader.

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister will remember that, during my participation on second reading of the Bill, I referred to the original Act which had the gradations, the 10 per cent, the 15 per cent and the 20 per cent, based on the length of time that one was in a prison camp. On the 10 per cent and 15 per cent gradations, do they currently have the same phrase about being an evader, or is it only in the section dealing with those who were incarcerated for more than 30 months?

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Chairman, any period in which the prisoner was incarcerated applies to the evader section. No matter how long the man or woman was in a prisoner of war camp, that time plus the length of time he or she was an evader are added together no matter how long the times are.

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Chairman, just for further clarification, I assume that the part in the original Bill that specifies the 10 per cent for three months, the 15 per cent for, I believe, 18

months, is still intact, that that has not been changed? The only thing we are changing here is compensation for those who were in prison in excess of 30 months.

**Mr. Hees:** That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Mr. Chairman, the proposal is to amend the compensation for former prisoners of war. I gather from the proposed amendment, depending on the war in which you were involved and the length of time you were a prisoner of war, that that would determine the amount of pension you would receive. Is that correct?

**Mr. Hees:** That is right, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Mr. Chairman, what is the rationale behind differentiating between the various wars? I believe there was the Korean War and then I believe there were the Dieppe prisoners of war. Is that correct? While I am on my feet, can the Minister tell how many individuals we are now talking about with respect to this section?

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Chairman, there are two classifications of prisoners of war. The first covers those who were in Japanese prisoner of war camps. Having visited that theatre of war in the last few months and having been brought face to face with a great many of the people who were in Japanese prisoner of war camps, I can assure the Hon. Member that what they went through is something that he would find very hard to believe. They went through unbelievable hardship and torture, everything you could imagine.

There are only two types of prisoners of war. One is the Japanese and the other are the Dieppe prisoners of war and any other prisoners of war. Those are the only two.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister just ended his comments by saying "any other"—

**Mr. Hees:** The Hon. Member for York South-Weston (Mr. Nunziata) asked me the numbers and I forgot to give him that answer. There are five hundred and forty-four who were Japanese prisoners of war and 1,550 other veteran POWs and widows who will benefit from this amendment.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Chairman, I have a matter for clarification. The Minister said 1,500. Is that the total number of people eligible under this section or is that 1,500 plus the 400 that he mentioned?

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Chairman, that is 1,550 veterans of the other class.

**Mr. Gauthier:** All classes?

**Mr. Hees:** They are the Hong Kong veterans, the people who were in Japanese prisoner of war camps. The other category is all other prisoners of war, and there were 1,550 prisoners of war and widows. That is the total. The Japanese prisoners of war total is 544.