

It so happens there are four other sections of this nature on the statute books of this country. Incidentally, all were passed under Liberal governments. All these sections do not read in exactly the same way, but the import is always the same—overriding rather than disallowing. One of them deals with international river improvements. I think that is acceptable. An international river is a river which flows along a border or which crosses a border and if something is done in Canada to affect such a river, something which affects people on the other side of the border, Canada is responsible under international law. A clause of this kind makes some sense in those circumstances.

Another such clause is to be found in the Fisheries Act as amended in 1970. I refer hon. members to the Statutes of Canada chapter 17. It has to do with deleterious substances and marine plant harvesting, presumably beyond the limits of provincial jurisdiction. Fair enough.

The third example is interesting. It is very topical. It has to do with nuclear liability. We have been hearing lately about a particular premier who has undertaken to negotiate contracts in the international field for the sale of uranium products or for the enrichment of uranium products in Canada for sale abroad. In this particular act there is a section which reads very much like section 3: "Subject to subsection (2) the Crown in right of Canada or the province is bound by this act." I think this particular premier will receive a rude shock when he returns to Canada from his tour abroad to find that section 33 of the Nuclear Liability Act, Chapter 29 of the Revised Statutes, may make it a little difficult for him to export enriched uranium.

The fourth of these sections on the statute books I find difficult to understand—I have still to examine its full implications. But it appears as part of the Explosives Act, chapter 15. It has the same kind of implication.

So there are four sections of this kind already on the statute books. A fifth is before us this evening and we are asked to do something about it. If I am not mistaken my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain will be proposing an amendment in an effort to make this a little more palatable in federal terms because this overriding feature is one which I do not find acceptable, and I am sure the provinces from east to west would agree with me.

May I call it ten o'clock?

Progress reported.

● (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

VETERANS AFFAIRS—PROPOSED INCREASE IN PENSIONS OF HONG KONG VETERANS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):
Madam Speaker, on Friday, November 29, as recorded at

Adjournment Debate

page 1798 of *Hansard*, I asked the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) a question regarding the recommendation concerning Hong Kong survivors made recently by the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. I believe it was my third time of asking when we might see the recommended legislation. The minister indicated in his response that the matter was under consideration both by him and by his department. He said that a matter like this takes time, but that if something is decided he would be glad to inform the House.

I am sure that all members of the House who are interested in veterans affairs will agree with me that one of the particularly decent and humane results of the Woods committee study, the report that followed it, and the legislation that came out of that report, was the fact that significant improvements were made in the pensions of Hong Kong veterans. My particular interest in this matter stems from the fact that there were many from my city of Winnipeg in the Winnipeg Grenadiers who were in Hong Kong, and spent years as prisoners as a result of that expedition. Any of us who know these veterans, these survivors of Hong Kong, are aware of the tremendously difficult experience through which they went.

As a result of the Woods committee recommendations legislation was passed which provided that any Hong Kong veteran or any Canadian who was a prisoner of the Japanese in that part of the world is to be regarded as being disabled at least to the extent of 50 per cent. This has the advantage of providing a little better pension for some than would otherwise be the case. It also has the very real advantage of providing that the widow of any Hong Kong veteran is guaranteed a full widow's pension as a matter of right. As I say, Madam Speaker, we regard this amendment to the Pension Act which dealt with Hong Kong veterans as one of the very decent and humane results that came out of the Woods report.

Even so, it is a fact that there are quite a few of these Hong Kong survivors for whom the going is still very tough. I am thinking in particular of those who are on pensions at rates between 50 per cent and 100 per cent. If I may use round figures, there are about 1,165 survivors of the Hong Kong experience. A hundred and seventy-five of these are on pensions of 100 per cent, and approximately 530 are on pensions of 50 per cent; as I say, no Hong Kong veterans are below 50 per cent. But in between these two groups there are roughly 460 whose pensions vary from 55 per cent to 95 per cent.

Many of these Hong Kong veteran survivors are finding it extremely difficult to hold jobs and stay in the labour market. It was on that background that the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, at its meeting of Tuesday, October 22, 1974, adopted a first report to the House of Commons, which was presented that afternoon, and which reads as follows:

The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs has the honour to present its first report.

While considering its Order of Reference dated Thursday, October 3, 1974 relating to the Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1975 under Veterans Affairs, your Committee agreed to report the following to the House:

Your Committee recommends that the government consider the advisability of introducing legislation to provide for full pensions to all Hong Kong veterans forced out of the labour market.