

*Veterans Affairs*

that are involved in this bill. When you add these percentages to the percentages that some of them may have for disabilities, there will be protection for widows that may not be there at the present time. As the bill and the schedule point out, we are making provision not only for widows but for children, dependents, and so on. This is a long overdue step. However, this is not the time to complain about the time that has been lost or to complain about the things that are not there. I am just glad that this bill is before us. Coming, as I do, from Winnipeg where we have many who were involved both at Hong Kong and Dieppe, I speak particularly for the people of my city in saying that we are glad this legislation has been brought in.

With all that I have had to say about this matter over the past many months, I certainly do not need to make the point that I could go on. I have already said that the time for speeches on this matter is over. The time has come to get the bill passed and to get it into effect. I am a little concerned that there is not a date in the bill. I had hoped there would be a reasonable period of retroactivity. The date is to be fixed by proclamation. I am afraid that means an effective date that is after the bill gets passed. Therefore, I would like to see the bill passed right now, today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Just a few words, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) for having introduced Bill C-92 now before the House, at the express request of several government members, and of course, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

I congratulate the minister who has obtained quite a few things for the Hong Kong veterans and Dieppe prisoners. I am sure that my brother, who disappeared at Dieppe in August of 1942 and who saw several married fellow-soldiers fall at his side, if he can hear me now, will be happy to hear—though it did take a long time—such a good ending.

However one thing worries me in this bill. I know the committee members did their share, everything they could, as well as the government, to achieve a reasonable objective. But, once again, one thing troubles me: I would like to see the amounts given on pages 7 and 8 indexed on the cost of living. If the cost of living increases—

[English]

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Yes, they are in the main bill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Beaudoin:** They are. I am sorry. I was not a member of this committee but if they are indexed, it means that the long nurtured dream of these families has been fulfilled, in particular these widowed women and these men who, as the minister said earlier, lost most of their joy of living after a 24, 30 or 35 months confinement.

Finally I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre in particular whom I heard at each meeting of the House leaders to which I had the honour to assist. He never missed a single opportunity to push for introduction of this bill. This is a concrete example of the concerted action of the opposition parties with the party in

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

power do something in favour of veterans and of the people for whom life had hardly any meaning. I think this is all to the credit of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and of the minister.

[English]

**Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, this a great day for parliament. It is one of the days when politicians of whatever political stripe can be proud of the fact that they are members of the House of Commons, and to indicate that when the chips are down and there is something well deserved we can all work together without any friction.

I do not wish to single out too many people. However, I think it is appropriate to say to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) that we all feel this legislation is long overdue and we are particularly proud that at this time of restraint he was able to overcome even that. This is one battle that is not going to be fought on the backs of the veterans as the minister has brought forward a piece of legislation that is long overdue. Most assuredly, it is needed.

On the other side of the House, I had the pleasure of serving with many of the members of the veterans affairs committee. In particular I think of the hon. member for Humber-St. George's—St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), the hon. member for Norfolk-Haldimand (Mr. Knowles), of course the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard). We all worked together to find a compromise, a solution. We would have all liked more. We would like to have seen a lot of things happen with this particular bill. We worked together in an in-camera session. We were able to resolve this matter to the satisfaction of the Dieppe prisoners of war, the Hong Kong veterans, the Legion and other organizations which made representations before us.

It may be necessary for Mr. John Mellor to change the title of his book "The Forgotten Heroes". That book spells out, probably as clearly and precisely as possible, the difficulties faced by the prisoners of war in Europe. I do not think I have read a better book. I read "The Shame and the Glory". It probably has more length and more individual statistics, but in so far as putting it all together, I think Mr. Mellor in his book "The Forgotten Heroes" has told the story very graphically.

There is one other thing I should like to say. It comes out of the book and is one of the things about Dieppe veterans. When the men were taken prisoner they were put in railway cars and moved inland in France. They had just come out of the shock of the terrible tragedy of Dieppe and were herded into these railway cars and taken long distances without any food. Finally, they were given some very meagre rations.

The Vichy French, for whatever reason, thought they could alienate the French Canadians from the English Canadians by offering additional food and benefits to the French Canadians. To Canada's eternal pride, the French-Canadians said, "We are one as Canadians, and that is why we fight". And they shared the additional food which was given them by the Vichy French. There was no question then of French and English being divided. They set a standard then and I believe that we, in peacetime, should