

creating an exceptional case. These hardships have left lasting after-effects which, as these men grow older, tend to become more disabling.

The recommendation of the White Paper is that all Hong Kong veterans who apply for a pension and have some degree of disability will automatically receive a basic minimum pension of 50 per cent. Of course, if their disability warrants it they will receive an even higher pension. The automatic 50 percent pension also means that when a Hong Kong veteran dies his widow and dependent children will automatically be eligible for pensions. The widows and orphans of Hong Kong veterans who died before this change takes effect, and who would otherwise not have been eligible, may also become eligible for pension.

HUNDRED PERCENT PENSIONERS

Another special case is that of 100 percent pensioners. Some of these men obviously suffer greater disadvantages than others – physically, socially and psychologically, depending upon the nature of their disabilities. We are not changing the 100 percent pension rates as this would erode the whole principle of compensation for service-related disability or death. We do, however, propose making provision for annual or lump sum grants of between \$400 and \$1,200 a year, for specified amenities to help these specially handicapped 100 percent pensioners get more enjoyment out of life.

Another evidence of the way the White Paper recommendations are designed to provide the pensioner or applicant for a pension with every possible consideration is the "benefit of the doubt" section. It has always been the policy to give the pension applicant the benefit of the doubt but now the effectiveness of this provision will be strengthened by spelling out clear-cut guide-lines on what exactly constitutes benefit of the doubt.

You will notice in the White Paper many other examples of a broader and more flexible approach to the granting of pensions to veterans and their dependants. Many of the new benefits are milestones in the history of this type of legislation.

ADJUDICATION OF CLAIMS

I would now like to draw your attention to the other aspect of the White Paper – improvements proposed in the procedure for adjudicating pension claims.

The major change in the pension procedure is the separation of initial adjudication of pension claims from subsequent appeals. At present, the Canadian Pension Commission adjudicates the initial claims and where adverse decisions are rendered it also handles the appeals that follow.

Criticism arises that, despite the acknowledged impartiality of the Commission members, it is not right for the same men to decide whether the Commission's previous decisions were correct and fair.

The White Paper proposes that the Department of Veterans Affairs, through a new branch, the

Directorate of Pensions, have the responsibility for adjudicating the initial pension claim, based largely on the written record. If an application does not succeed, the applicant will then be able to appear before the Entitlement Hearing Division of the remodelled Canadian Pension Commission, with his advocate and witnesses. These hearings, as at present, would be held in various centers across Canada close to the applicant's home. Then, if necessary, a final appeal could be made to a new Appeal Division of the restructured Canadian Pension Commission here in Ottawa.

Assisting the pension applicant, without charge, will be the Bureau of Pension Advocates which will carry out the duties of the present Veterans Bureau. Because the new Bureau will be independent of both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Canadian Pension Commission, it will be more clearly the servant of the pension applicant. In this new role the Pension Advocates will have the same relation with the applicants as solicitors to their clients. No longer will they have to reveal evidence which may prejudice their client's claim....

RABIES IN CANADA

There were 771 confirmed cases of rabies in Canada during the period from April 1 to July 31, according to the Health of Animals Branch of the Canada Department of Agriculture. During the same period last year, 507 cases were diagnosed.

The marked increase is attributed in part to an increasing public awareness of rabies. More specimens are submitted to Federal Government laboratories and, as a result, more cases are diagnosed.

Wildlife accounted for 445 of the cases during the four-month period. Of these, 305 were foxes and 119 were skunks. The balance was made up of five raccoons in Ontario and one in Quebec, four ground-hogs, three bats, seven wolves and one deer, all found in Ontario. During the corresponding 1968 period, there were 321 wildlife cases. Of these 193 were foxes and 111 were skunks.

Cases involving domestic animals – dogs, cats and farm livestock – rose to 326 from 186 in the 1968 period. A higher incidence of the disease among cats, dogs, cattle and sheep was largely responsible for the increase. The number of rabid cats almost doubled, to 54 from 29 last year. Cases of rabies among dogs increased to 37 from 24; among cattle, to 184 from 102; and among sheep, to 24 from nine. One rabid goat was reported in Ontario.

Ontario, with 622, had the largest number of infections. Elgin and Peterborough Counties, with 32 and 29 cases respectively, had the highest incidence of rabies during the four-month period. Carleton with 28 cases, and Huron with 27, were other areas with a large number of cases.

Quebec reported 81 cases, Manitoba reported 28, Saskatchewan reported 20, and the Northwest Territories reported one.