

Pension Act and Other Acts

perhaps, that this bill is being debated at this time or that it will be debated tonight, because the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs is holding its hearings on the reference from this House concerning prisoners of war. The National Prisoners of War Association will be presenting a brief, as will be the Dieppe Veterans and Prisoners of War Association. I hope that time for debate will be extended this afternoon, because some of us will be busy in that committee this evening and will only have an opportunity to speak this afternoon.

I believe that the principle set out in this bill, namely, applying a cost of living formula to veterans pensions and allowances in order to provide for annual increases, is one of the most important principles that we shall introduce in connection with any pension scheme. In the past, the 2 per cent escalation applied to the Canada Pension Plan and guaranteed income supplement; there has been no similar allowance or increase for our veterans. In the past they were granted a lump sum increase to offset the effects of inflation. This bill, therefore, will let veterans know exactly the increases that they are to get, because their allowances and pensions will increase as the cost of living increases. This increase is to apply not only to the basic pension itself but also to the attendant allowances, the clothing allowance, the dependent parent allowance, the exceptional incapacity allowance and other allowances which may be of benefit to the pensioner.

The minister made clear on Friday that he does not consider this increase as a lump sum increase for meeting the demands that the National Veterans Association has made to the department and to the government. Rather, this is to be an increase which will compensate for the effects of inflation. In other words, if our dollars because of inflation are to be cheaper, our veterans are to get more dollars.

The minister made it clear that the basic rate of the Canadian veterans pension is under careful study. I believe that the National Veterans Association made it clear that they want to see the basic rate increased to \$4,550, which I believe is close to the basic, average labour wage paid in the federal civil service. I am sure that many hon. members who represent veterans will want to see the government moving as quickly as possible in that direction. I know that veterans associations have responded by pointing out that the increase which has been granted will only offset the effects of inflation, and that it is not like an actual lump sum increase which would bring pension benefits to levels that the associations feel are desirable.

The amount of veterans legislation that this parliament has dealt with, especially in the last year, is notable. Last year, under Bill C-203, changes were made which established the Pension Review Board; the Bureau of Pensions Advocates was established as an independent body. That bill also introduced exceptional incapacity allowances and special benefits for Hong Kong veterans as well as the benefit of a doubt provision. Also, there were increases last year in the war veterans allowance and veterans pensions of 15 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. I should like to add my words of support for this bill. I understand that approximately 200,000 veterans across this country will benefit from this bill. The minister has said that he wants this bill passed as soon as possible so

[Mr. Foster.]

that veterans will benefit as quickly as possible. To that I lend my support.

Mr. MacRae: Mr. Speaker, may I call it five o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to private members' business as listed in today's order paper, namely, public bills, private bills and notices of motions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENT TO ABOLISH CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

On the order: Private members' public bills:

February 25, 1972—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs of Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (abolition of corporal punishment).—Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I believe there is general agreement on the part of all members of this House to allow this bill to be withdrawn, inasmuch as its subject matter has finally become part of a government piece of legislation which is now before a committee of the House. That piece of legislation will return here soon for third reading and will be forwarded to the other place.

An hon. Member: It is back.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I hear that it is back. Its consideration is moving with despatch. I hope that its passage through this place and the other place will be speedy, in view of the recent sentence imposed by a judge in Hamilton. He ordered ten strokes of the lash to be given to a young man, thus proving that some judges have not got the message—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Be careful!

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):—that this outmoded form of punishment is no deterrent and does not protect society. I would therefore move:

That the bill be withdrawn, its subject matter having been dealt with by way of government legislation.

[Translation]

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I would like first of all to thank the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) for having withdrawn his bill because, as he explained, the government has decided in its wisdom to include Bill C-2 in the amendments of the Criminal Code. The bill will be discussed in the House in the near future on second reading since the committee has considered it in detail and the report has been submitted.

Now, concerning the remark made by the hon. member following an article published in the *Globe and Mail* today about the sentence applied in the case of a 16 year old boy condemned to imprisonment and ten strokes of the lash—