

Canadian Forces Act

whether they should be placed under the code of military discipline. I think they should remain under the ordinary civilian discipline of their own country or possibly the country in which they happen to be.

I cite that as an example of the sort of thing which is to be found amongst other things which are highly desirable but which in itself may be highly undesirable. That is one of the features of the bill concerning which we shall certainly want considerably more information than we have at the present time before we, or at least I, would agree to it. I hesitate to agree to the resolution because of the statement the minister has made in connection with this matter.

As I said, we have had this sort of thing done in connection with national defence bills for the past two or three years, and I think this resolution is the worst example of grab-bag legislation since the transitional powers act shortly after the war which was generally known as the Heinz bill, the fifty-seven varieties bill. I think I can say that everyone on this side of the house raised strenuous complaints about the inclusion of fifty-odd matters in one bill, and as a general rule the government has not repeated that practice. They did not bring in further bills in which a large number of matters were grouped together with the exception of bills concerning national defence in the past two or three years. I think it would be very much better from the point of view of national defence and also the procedure of the house if that custom were abandoned and the government would return to introducing each matter as a separate bill which would stand or fall on its own merits rather than being carried along with other things or in some cases holding back the passage of other measures.

Mr. Campney: I should like to make one or two observations in answer to what has been said. I would hasten to assure hon. members that the idea of bringing in one bill containing practically all matters affecting the Department of National Defence and the services is not at all arbitrary or unusual. It arises out of a fact which I believe has been stated before in the house, and to which the house in past years has agreed. It is a matter of convenience for the armed services. We now have units scattered throughout the length and breadth of Canada and in many other countries, as every hon. member knows, and it is not only convenient but indeed essential that the authorities in all these scattered units should have readily at their command all the statutory changes that have been made each year and which are cumulative upon one another.

[Mr. Harkness.]

It has proven extremely helpful not only from the point of view of administration but in acquainting members of the forces abroad and throughout Canada of any changes that have taken place which may affect them much more quickly, clearly and consecutively than any other way we know of. I should also like to observe that in the annual cumulative table of public statutes in the annual volume of statutes issued each year all these amendments, like any others, are thoroughly and clearly cross-indexed, so that I think that persons desiring to be informed as to amendments to specific acts have very little difficulty in finding them.

With respect to the question of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre as to why we are seeking to amend a previous annual act, the reason for that is that the amendment, as he will find when the bill is brought down, does not affect any continuing statute. It refers to a specific matter which has to do with the special force in Korea. This amendment includes that matter, and rather than carry it through the principal statute and back out again it has been left in the form of an amendment to the annual act.

Mr. Pearkes: Would the associate minister give us a little more information about the amendment to the Senate and House of Commons Act with relation to time spent by members of the House of Commons on military service. We do not have very much information as to the intention of the amendment. Is it the intention to allow time spent on military service to count as time spent in the House of Commons, or is it not to count as time spent in the House of Commons? I think the minister might give us a little more information on that point.

Mr. Campney: Without anticipating the specific terms of the bill, I think hon. members will remember that in the Senate and House of Commons Act as it now stands there is provision in respect of members of the reserve army on annual training. It is proposed to make the provision cover the reserves of the three services, the army, the navy and the air force, because for some reason the navy and the air force were never included in the act. That is probably by reason of the age of the existing section of the act. It is proposed to include reserves of all services with respect to any military activities upon which they may be legitimately engaged. It does not, I think, change the basic principle except probably to widen it a little, but it does bring in the other two services.

Mr. Pearkes: In the past have members of the House of Commons not been allowed to take part in the activities of the reserve navy or auxiliary air force?