

a ship was given the opportunity of going out and working in industry, which was not given to members of the armed forces.

There were two training schools set up, one in Nova Scotia and one in Ontario, at Prescott, for the purpose of training engineers and the like.

I could go on. I have an additional list of welfare benefits, clubs that were set up all across this country to assist merchant seamen, and so on. So when it is said that they have received no benefits or benefits that are entirely inadequate, I have to take issue with that statement. That they may be entitled to more; that they have performed wonderful service for Canada—with such a statement I cannot quarrel because that is a fact. While I should like to see perhaps many things done that are not done for the merchant seamen, it is unfortunate to some extent that the merchant navy was not placed in a different category. I am not making any apologies for that. My hon. friends will remember that the subject was discussed last year and again this year on the compensation act, and at that time I think I made the position of the department and the government fairly clear. I hope hon. members do not think the position of the merchant navy and the contribution made by them to the war effort is not realized and not appreciated; it is. When compared with other countries, I think the position in Canada far surpasses that of all other lands.

Mr. MERRITT: The minister has made a brave show of these benefits. I have written them down, and when you examine them you find two startling things. A great number of them such as the manning pool advantages, leave and railway transportation, the detention allowance for merchant seamen who were captured by the enemy—these are all what I would call “in-service” benefits. They are not veterans benefits at all. I do not think the minister can count those when we come to discuss whether these men are receiving veterans benefits. On the other hand, with regard to the other list of benefits he gave, reinstatement in civilian employment, bonuses for disabilities, and medical and dental care for pensioners, those benefits are strictly limited in their application to those who suffered a disability from enemy action, as I understand it, and are not even available to those who suffered disability through the ordinary perils of the sea.

Mr. CHEVRIER: My hon. friend is not omitting the war service bonuses of ten per cent?

Mr. MERRITT: I shall deal with those in a moment. Second, of course, the completion

of training benefits is limited to those who want to continue in sea service. When you look at these two sets of benefits as I have put them before the committee they are only a brave show, but not nearly good enough. They do not satisfy me at all that the minister is giving practical recognition to the respect he feels for these men.

The minister mentions the ten per cent bonus. I said, when I spoke before, that I was perfectly prepared to take those things into account as deductions perhaps from the general principle. It may be that you could prove to me that the merchant seamen are not entitled to a reestablishment credit at all. I do not say you could, but you might be able to do so. But that does not help the minister in arguing that these men should not be treated as veterans.

Item stands.

Progress reported.

At eleven o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.

Wednesday, July 2, 1947

The house met at two o'clock.

DOMINION DAY

FURTHER MESSAGES OF GREETINGS AND GOOD WISHES ON THE OCCASION OF THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in reference to the congratulatory messages of which I made mention in the house yesterday, I should like to add that the following message was received during the day from the President of the United States:

On this national anniversary of Canada it gives me great pleasure to send to you and to the people of Canada the hearty congratulations and renewed good wishes of the people of the United States. I should like to take this occasion again to thank you and the many other Canadians who did so much to give me a most enjoyable visit last month. I cannot express too warmly my sincere friendship for you and for the people of Canada.

Harry S. Truman.

Congratulatory messages were also received from the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile, from the Ambassador of Belgium in Ottawa, and from the Consul General of Haiti.

BANKING AND COMMERCE

Ninth report of standing committee on banking and commerce.—Mr. Cleaver.