

Those were trying times. Men left the police service and went to serve in the air force. Some of them were veterans of the last war, and they lost their rights to pension. I appeal to the minister, as I did in connection with those in the penitentiaries service, to see that when these men come back under his jurisdiction they receive justice. They should be put back and every consideration should be given to them for the services they have rendered.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: Under the present state of the law we are not allowed to count the war service for pension purposes, unless a man obtained leave and was still nominally on our books. But there was a provision made after the last war to enable that period to be included. It is my hope that when the military pension scheme has been disposed of it will be possible for me to bring forward a bill to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Act. I should think it might be agreeable to the house to do on this occasion what was done after the last war, and for the same reasons.

Mr. KIDD: That is what I want. There seems to be a feeling in the various departments that the men who left in the early days of the war and before the war to join the armed services did not receive very much encouragement from the senior men in their departments. They said, "We want to keep you in the mounted police service", or in the penitentiaries service, as the case may be. However, these men left to fulfil what they believed was their obligation to His Majesty. They proceeded overseas, and came back. I appeal to the minister to see that any men under his supervision get a square deal. I believe most of them are prepared to pay to the pension fund, if accepted. I will not say there is an effort to draw a red herring across the trail, but they are not receiving the consideration they should receive.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: They have been told that, under the law as it is, that period cannot be included. The only reason I did not have a bill at this session was that I understood there was to be a bill dealing with the military pensions, and I thought it would be preferable not to have the two bills at the same time, in view of the differences between them. I feel it is better that they be dealt with separately. There are things required in the military Pension Act which are not required in our act, and conversely there are things we think are necessary in our act which are not required in the military Pension Act. There will have to be a bill—I hope at the next session—to amend the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police Act. When there was a bill brought in after the last war to amend that act there was a provision that the period of service, even for those who had not previously been connected with the force, would be counted for pension purposes in the force.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: The minister should be commended for his intention to have a bill such as he has indicated brought in at the next session. That is a change which will be most gratifying to the men in the mounted police who have had a certain feeling of annoyance at the law as it now stands.

I would add one other suggestion to the minister. Reference has been made to the men who, serving in the mounted police and coming to their period of retirement during the war, were requested to stay on in the mounted police force, but chose to join the army and go overseas to serve. While they were overseas, quite a number of these mounted police married. They came back from overseas and, when reinstated or accepted for reattestation, they were, as I understand the situation, taken in as single men. Having regard to the fact that they did serve and that, had they stayed in Canada in the mounted police, their time would have counted toward the period after which they could be married, I think these men should be permitted to count the time spent overseas in arriving at the period within which they are permitted to marry and receive the necessary allowances. I know the attitude of the minister toward the mounted police has been reasonable; I know that fairness appeals to him as it does to the commissioner, but this is one of those things that cause a degree of ill-feeling which cannot but interfere with morale. With the greatest of sincerity, I suggest that it is not a large matter and that these men who got married overseas should be permitted to count their time in the armed forces in the determination of the period within which the necessary allowances would be made to their wives.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I am sure that the suggestion made by the hon. member appeals to all hon. members. The commissioner, as well as ourselves, realizes that in that respect the morale of the whole service must be taken into account, and the commissioner makes the kind of recommendation that is proper for the morale of the whole service. A substantial proportion of the R.C.M.P. must remain single for a certain period because there is much of the service that has to be performed by