

*Children of War Dead*

schedule B are included in this legislation I would ask the parliamentary assistant to review the answer he gave and tell me whether orphans of men of the merchant marine who lost their lives at sea as the result of enemy action are included.

**Mr. Bennett:** The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich is quite right. I recognize him as one of the experts on veterans affairs in the house, and I must say that I misunderstood his question because I thought he was inquiring whether the clause was being extended as far as eligibility of class was concerned. I thought that he knew that the children of deceased merchant marine people were covered. The answer of course is that schedule B of the present Children of War Dead (Education Assistance) Act applies which means that the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act, part I, governs, and that includes the merchant marine.

**Mr. Pearkes:** I thank the parliamentary assistant for his generous reference to myself. However, I could not have known beforehand because the bill was not in our hands and we did not know that there was a schedule B. Nevertheless I am very pleased that children of deceased members of the merchant marine are included.

**Mr. Bennett:** The schedule was part of last session's bill, which became effective on July 1, 1953.

**Mr. Green:** In the debate which took place in the house on April 20, 1953, the minister said that whereas there were 12,000 children who had lost their fathers only about 10 per cent would benefit under the legislation, or approximately 1,200. Does that view still stand or must the estimate of the department be changed?

**Mr. Bennett:** In round figures, the figure still stands. The number that I quoted, 225, is running fairly close to the estimate.

**Mr. Green:** Then the estimate is that over the years the maximum number that will benefit will be 1,200.

**Mr. Bennett:** That is right.

**Mr. Brooks:** In subsection (c) of section 2 of the act we find the following, "discontinued by reason of the child having reached the age of 21 years". Suppose the child of a deceased war pensioner is 22 years of age. Can he begin a university course at that age?

**Mr. Bennett:** Provided he qualifies under the four subsections of section 1.

**Mr. Brooks:** As to matriculation and so on?

**Mr. Bennett:** Yes. He has to have his matriculation and he has to qualify otherwise.

[Mr. Pearkes.]

One of the reasons for this amendment was that phrase in paragraph (iii) of section 2(c), "discontinued by reason of the child having reached the age of 21 years". As I explained on the resolution stage, if for one reason or another the pension was discontinued to a child at age 19, then under the old wording he would not be eligible if he were now 22. Now he becomes eligible.

**Mr. Brooks:** I was thinking of a young man who did not matriculate when he was 16 or 17 and who is now able to get benefit under this act. He matriculates at 20 or 21, which often happens, and attends university at 22. In that event he would not graduate until he was 26 or 27. Looking at last year's act, I see that section 5 reads as follows:

No allowance or costs shall be paid under this act in respect of a student who has attained the age of 25 years except in so far as may be necessary to enable him to complete the academic year in which he attains that age.

In the case of anyone entering college at 22 and graduating at 26 I would think that there is a contradiction there, and I was wondering if the parliamentary assistant had noted it.

**Mr. Bennett:** As the hon. member for Royal knows, the age limit of 25 was placed in the original act because it was the view that children of veterans should start their university career or other training course at the normal age of 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21. The hon. member has raised a good point. This is a new act, and I am sure that if cases of hardship are brought to the attention of the minister consideration will be given to the age limit. As a matter of fact, I did think of that point and discussed it with the officials of the department, and I was told that no such cases exist at the present time. Does the hon. member know of any?

**Mr. Brooks:** I do not know.

**Mr. Bennett:** But if there are I assure the hon. member that sympathetic consideration will be given to them.

**Mr. Castleden:** Having regard to the age limit of 21, has the parliamentary assistant any figures as to the approximate number of people who have been excluded because of this clause?

**Mr. Bennett:** There are twelve children attending school who will receive direct and immediate benefit from the passing of this amendment. As I said on the resolution stage, it is thought that the total number will not exceed twenty-five, but there are twelve at school now. As you can see, the benefits of the legislation are retroactive to July 1, 1953.