

Canadian Forces Act

a couple of weeks, probably, to draw unemployment insurance benefits and who has not a job. His pension contributions are tied up and he is waiting and waiting. It is no longer a routine matter. I know that with going from basket to basket, and everybody doing his little bit on it, day by day, it gets jammed up. But I believe that the defence department should allocate to some particular little group in the department the responsibility of handling that matter and that matter only, and that it should not be handled just as a sideline with a lot of other routine.

Then I think that in the Department of Veterans Affairs there should be some definite group or section with the obligation of taking care of that particular matter and clearing with the Department of Labour, just as expeditiously as possible, a release at least of the unemployment insurance. Then, of course, if it takes a little bit more time to straighten out the man's pay account, that is understandable.

This matter of establishing his unemployment insurance credits should not take very much time. It would appear to me, from the correspondence I have had and the delays there are from time to time, as though no one had been appointed in either department to do that particular job. I have been advised by the Department of National Defence that they have to go through three departments. I feel that the Department of Labour could handle the matter better once the service documents are cleared.

Those are the three grievances I wanted to bring to the attention of the minister. I hope he made notes of them and will not forget them. I hope he will do something about the case of the officer or member of the services who may die before he has served sufficient time to qualify for a pension. The present provision is not good enough. We are asking people to enter the service as a career, and it is not good enough to leave a man's family in the position of having to fight everybody in Canada in order to get a bite to eat, simply because something happened to him, in ten, twelve or fifteen years. It boils down to that now. I believe something should be done about it. I hope the minister will think about it. There are a lot of other small things with which we can deal as we go through the bill.

Mr. Campney: I well remember the first case mentioned by the hon. member. He brought it up last year, and upon making inquiries I found that under our act his estate was paid the maximum amount it could be paid. The real question is one of

income tax, about which I would not volunteer an opinion. I can tell the hon. member that this type of case is again under review with the income tax people.

On the second point, having to do with the speedy return to a soldier who is demobilized of his contributions to the defence services pension fund, I agree that in the past there has been considerable delay, more delay than should be the case. I can assure the hon. member the matter has been given very serious study. We hope to make arrangements shortly which will make it possible to deal with these cases much more speedily.

With regard to the last matter the hon. member mentioned, I had not heard about it until the hon. member made his observation. I did not know of any delay on our part in respect of unemployment insurance contributions. I shall look into that.

Mr. Gillis: The roadblock may not be in the Department of National Defence, but may be in the other two departments.

Mr. Noseworthy: I want to come back to two statements made by the minister. In the first place, he says there is no discrimination. I want him to remember this. It is only those who were in the permanent forces prior to June, 1944, whose pensions are subject to that one-third reduction. If they joined the forces after June, 1944, and are compulsorily retired after they have served ten years, they are not subject to that one-third reduction; at least that is the information I was given at headquarters.

Then, the minister claims that these men were given a choice of retiring under part IV or part V. These men were compulsorily retired, and their choice was either to retire or to revert to the rank which they held before the war and continue in the service at that rank. They had either to retire or to forgo the rank to which they had been promoted during the war. The fact remains that there is this difference. A man who was in the forces before the war requires eighteen years in the service to receive the same pension as a man who joined the forces after June, 1944, who serves twelve years. There is a difference of six years between the two men.

Mr. Campney: The hon. member disagrees with me, Mr. Chairman, in my statement that, as of now, people coming into the service and retiring with less than 20 years' service get a one-third reduction on their pension until they are 65 years of age. This is so, and has been so according to