

Mr. LAPOINTE: In 1924 and even since. As I said, when the bill came into committee the pensions were doubled and in many cases they were increased to three times their original size. The salaries have also been increased and so far as the constables or privates are concerned, they receive a pension although they do not contribute to it.

Mr. BENNETT: Their widows do not.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I admit their wives do not but the difference is that the officers are paying a contribution to the fund and that is probably the reason why their wives are receiving a portion of the pension which is granted to them. After all, there are other public servants and if this principle of granting pensions to widows of public servants is adopted, even without any contribution on the part of those public servants, it would extend far beyond what my hon. friend has in view. The leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett) knows that there are, for instance, many widows of men who have been judges in Canada, and at the present time those widows are absolutely destitute; that applies in some cases to the widows of men who were on the bench of the highest court in the land. They are asking for pensions and those cases are worthy of sympathy. However, it is difficult to grant their demands and it is even more difficult to know where to draw the line. In the case of civil servants there is a contribution of part of their salaries for the purpose of creating a fund which will be beneficial to them on their retirement and will benefit their widows. I shall certainly lay before my colleagues all the representations which have been made in connection with this bill. As I said, it is merely for the purpose of correcting an anomaly and it is not intended to create a new condition. The purpose is to give to constables as well as to officers who are retired during a certain period the benefit of the pay which they were receiving both as to bonuses and as to salary. Of course the same applies to widows of officers who were retired during the same period and who will receive the benefits to which they are entitled because of the salary the officers were receiving at the time of their retirement.

Mr. ADSHEAD: May I draw the attention of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) to the difference between the pensions under bills 132 and 133, the latter applying to judges. After a certain age the judges are continued on full pension for all of their salary. I do not know why one civil servant should be treated in one way and another in another. If judges of the land can retire at a certain age without contributing anything towards

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superannuation, I cannot see why they should receive full pensions at the end of their service. The civil servants have to contribute to a fund and I do not see why the discrimination should be made. I think the hard work of these old pioneers, many of whom I have known and who have kept order in Canada, should receive better treatment.

Mr. LAPOINTE: All this was considered when we increased their pensions to two or three times what they had been.

Mr. COOTE: I appreciate what the minister did in 1924 and I appreciate his action in bringing in the bill. I do, however, want to protest against leaving without pension the widows of non-commissioned officers and private constables; I refer particularly to those who served in the west twenty or thirty years ago. To my mind there has been discrimination against them; no provision seems to have been made for the widows of former members of the force.

Mr. BENNETT: I would not take up the time of the committee with respect to this matter were it not for the fact that some questions have been raised which are of great importance. The right to pension in the absence of a statutory provision to the contrary arises by contract only, and when any man or woman becomes a servant of the state it is part of his or her contract that a pension shall be granted under certain circumstances. If they receive that pension they have no cause for complaint; it seems to me that that is fairly obvious. That is one of the reasons why men and women are sometimes willing to take smaller salaries than they otherwise would accept in order to secure a position which may enable them to have a pension at a given time. For instance, a judge may leave a lucrative practice because he knows that at the end of a certain period he will receive a fixed revenue per annum for the rest of his life. This is a fact which was stated on more than one occasion in this house by a former Minister of Justice who had been a judge. In days gone by, a man who joined the Northwest Mounted Police was informed by the terms of his contract that if he served a certain number of years, through good behaviour, he would be entitled to a fixed pension for the rest of his life; that contract has been kept. In this country, so far as the right of the widow to a pension is concerned, in all cases within my knowledge it has been predicated upon contributions being made by the husband. I know nothing of cases where pensions have been allowed in