

EVIDENCE

JUNE 14, 1951.

4:00 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we have a quorum. I should apologize to the committee that you did not have longer notice cancelling our meeting of yesterday morning, but as you know I have been absent, and in the interval the House decided to work mornings, and I found everybody was tied up with committees, and consequently I took the liberty of delaying our meeting until this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

At our last meeting we were discussing bill 288, a bill to amend the Pension Act, and we carried the bill with the exception of two clauses which were stood over. Clause 10, page 5, was stood over at the request of the Commission in order to clarify the wording. Now, we have copies here of the proposed changes. I think the quickest way to do it would be to pass those around.

You will notice, gentlemen, that this paragraph 10 is dealt with at the bottom of the page which has just been handed to you. The amendment was designed, you will remember, to make sure that the provisions for those who were separated by agreement were extended to widows of veterans in all provinces. It now reads:

- (b) Notwithstanding anything contained in paragraph (a) of this subsection, when a woman has been divorced, legally separated or separated by agreement from a member of the forces who has died, and such woman is in a dependent condition, the Commission may, in its discretion, award such pension not exceeding the rates set out in Schedule B to this Act, as it deems fit in the circumstances, although such woman has not been awarded alimony or an alimentary allowance or is not entitled to allowance under the terms of the separation agreement, if in the opinion of the Commission, she would have been entitled to an award of alimony or an alimentary allowance or an allowance had she made application therefor under the process of law.

The change is to add the words: "or separated by agreement" to make it conform to the language in paragraph (a) of the same section.

Mr. LENNARD: Mr. Chairman, is "desertion" covered?

The CHAIRMAN: This deals only with wives of veterans who have died.

Mr. LENNARD: I may not be quite in order.

Mr. MELVILLE: I may not quite understand your point, Mr. Lennard, but I take it your question relates to a disability pensioner who has deserted his wife. The commission's action in that regard is governed by the Act, which says: "who is maintained or entitled to be maintained by the pensioner." If we are satisfied that she has not lost her entitlement to be maintained by him, then we would award additional pension on her behalf.

Mr. HERRIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I was not present at the last meeting, but I would like Mr. Melville to explain just how this would work in the various provinces.

Mr. MELVILLE: May I assure Mr. Herridge it would make no difference in any province: it has universal application.