

*Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans*

all three stages of the bill today on the basis of one speaker per party.

**Mr. Smith:** That is correct, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent of the House to proceed to Bill S-25?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

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## PRIVATE BILLS

[English]

### THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE VETERANS IN CANADA

**Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine)** moved that Bill S-25, to amend the act of incorporation of the Association known as The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole.

He said: Madam Speaker, fellow members, I have the honour of presenting Bill S-25, an act respecting the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, for debate here in the House of Commons. As presented by the hon. Senator Jack Marshall, Bill S-25 will receive all-party support here in all three stages. This is not a controversial bill; in fact, just the contrary is just the case.

I would like to begin by giving my most sincere congratulations to the four witnesses representing The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans at the Senate Health, Welfare and Science Committee. Stan Stillwell of Winnipeg, who is president of Dominion Command of The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada; Albert Bianchini of Edmonton, who is the vice-president of Dominion Command; John C. McArthur who is secretary-treasurer of Dominion Command; and Shannon Howard Martin, their legal adviser, all made excellent contributions to the deliberations.

The purpose of this bill is simple. It makes amendments to the act incorporating the association known as The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada. Its purpose is to allow those people supporting the purposes and objectives of the association to become eligible for membership. This expanded eligibility is necessary in order to maintain membership levels and will also serve another very useful purpose. It will allow the continuation and perhaps the expansion of the many noteworthy projects undertaken by The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans across Canada. I will expand on this in a moment.

The belief that this bill will mean that The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans would cease to be a veterans' organization is simply not true in the spirit of the proposal. The admirable work carried out by this group represents a united veteran brethren working on behalf of others who are less fortunate than themselves. Would this noble goal be lost just because others of the same mind would be permitted to aid in that endeavour? I do not think so. Would the participation in

hundreds of local events such as parades, community barbecues and bazaars be lost because those who wanted to help but were not veterans were admitted to the army, navy and air force team? I do not believe this would happen. Would the canteens in place across Canada suddenly close their doors, or would the feeling of patriotism ever present in this collection of individuals diminish as a result of the entrance of people who agreed with the aims and objectives of the veterans' association? None of these events would happen.

It is my belief that the veterans who are now running the show would pass on the traditions, the practices and the spirit to new members, just as a grandfather passes on old stories to his grandchildren. The legend would be enhanced in the telling and the example set would be a goal to be strived for.

New members would not detract from the tradition set by veterans' organizations. They would be expected to live up to and even improve upon it. The witnesses assured the Senate committee studying this bill that all persons applying for membership are subject to a careful screening process. They made it clear that it is unlikely that former veterans would tolerate the membership of men and women who had fought against Canada, or who were known to be opposed to the principles and objectives of a free, democratic society. What this bill does is legalize what is already a policy enforced by The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, as it did in the case passed last year of the Royal Canadian Legion.

The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans Association in Canada has a rich history and I would be remiss in not mentioning it. Some Canadians may think that there is only one organization representing veterans in Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion. There are, however, several organizations and The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans Association in Canada holds the distinguished position of being the oldest veterans' organization in the country.

Documentary evidence shows that the organization was in existence in 1840 under the title of "Army and Navy Veterans." There is reason to believe that units of the association were active even before that time. Membership in the earliest units were recruited from the ranks of veterans of the war of 1812-14 and migrating veterans of the navy and Wellington's army. It is even possible to assume, therefore, that some form of this organization was in existence in the city of Montreal in 1840 and that date is arbitrarily accepted as the time of its founding.

Soldiers who served in various campaigns abroad, such as the India mutiny of 1858, along with other battles during that period, formed through their achievements a sense of comradeship borne of dangers faced together. Ever-increasing membership grew from this comradeship in the oldest of all Canadian veterans' organizations.

When the country was confronted by the grave crisis of August, 1914, members of the army and navy veterans in Canada of that day were foremost in volunteering their services and in aiding the authorities to recruit men for the