

letters between that time and now without getting any satisfaction at all, the department relying wholly on the leave authorization certificate and allowing no credence whatsoever to the calculations which were made on the routine orders, a copy of which, as I said, he managed to have kept where it can be seen how the calculations were made and where the actual dates appear which were used for leave starting on August 15, 1970 and the final date of the man's service on March 11, 1971. Yet those dates were not transferred to the leave form, with the result that the man is one day short. We might even look at this as a breach of trust. I do not know where to lay the blame, but it seems to me that it is more than just a coincidence this should have happened.

● (1740)

One should consider the facility available to public servants. They are still allowed to retire one day before the end of a calendar year. For example, their retirement date can be set on December 30, 1978, so that they are one day in retirement and may enjoy, two days later, the full indexing which would come on their pensions in 1979. When one considers that, one realizes it is playing with the intent and the letter of the law so that an advantage can be taken. I cannot see why that same one-day leniency should not be available to Major Fox and the CPO's we have heard about from the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East.

Not only are members of the public service allowed to retire on December 30 so that they will be on retirement on December 31, and thereby two days later on January 1 have a pension which is indexed the following year, but there are some members who are deemed to have retired, for example on December 30, 1978, and continue as fully paid members of the public service on into 1979 because they are engaged in a particular work or study which should not be interrupted. This deeming to have retired aspect of the matter also is an argument in favour of allowing a certain amount of latitude, a greater amount of latitude, or even some latitude of one, two or three days in the calculations which have occurred in the case of Major Fox and these other instances. When it can be done for public servants, I fail to see why it should not be done for members of the armed forces.

One should consider the deliberate attempt made by members to find out what day they can go on leave or whether they have that even number. The 28-year service record makes life easier for every one all round. It enables members of the forces to draw their indexed pensions at the age of 57. At the present time, with only 27 years and 364 days of service, they must wait until they are 58 years of age. This is verging on cruel and unusual punishment. I wonder, as did the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East, whether there is something deliberate here in recalculating so as to deprive some members of the entitlement. They would have been prepared to spend another day, two days or three days in service so as to be absolutely certain they would draw the entitlement to which they were due when the time came.

Pensions

I feel there is a case to be made. I have not done a calculation myself. Perhaps I should have done a little more homework on this, but I wonder, in the calculation of the rehabilitation, annual and special leave, whether due allowance was made for the Labour Day holiday, Thanksgiving in October, Christmas in December, New Year's in January, and if the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) had his way, there might have been even a February 15 holiday in there which should have been entered and might not have been calculated.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We are glad to have your support.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Just as an aside, I would have argued in favour of June 15 as Magna Carta Day, a day to celebrate a great occasion in the constitutional history of our country. However, Major Fox would not have been able to benefit from June 15 because he thought his term of service ended on March 11, yet the date on the papers turned out to be March 10. Matters which are that close in their calculations, particularly when deliberate and conscientious efforts were made by conscientious people to calculate things properly, and then to be done out of an entitlement which might have been regulated easily by another day or two of service on the base before setting off on leave, deserve much more attention than has been given by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Danson) and his staff.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) for his concern about these marginal cases. His proposal is one which certainly is imaginative. But whether or not that particular proposal is accepted, I hope a way can be found so that these cases of obvious injustice can be corrected.

I hope the House will not mind if I say that this reference to counting leap year days reminds me of something which happened here some years ago. I do not want to rob the member of being the originator of the use of leap year days, but I recall an incident back in 1947 when Mr. King was still prime minister. He was a great person for celebrating anniversaries and getting everything noted about his place in history.

It was announced one day that there would be an occasion to celebrate his having been prime minister for 20 years. It occurred in 1947. Just by chance, President Truman was here that day. We gathered out in the rotunda, and the portraits of Mr. Borden and Mr. King, which now hang on either side of the front door of this chamber, were hung that day in the rotunda. But some of us were curious as to how Mr. King could determine that that was the twentieth anniversary of his becoming prime minister, since he had been in and out of office. Of course we got from the prime minister's office the answer that he had counted the days. He had counted 20 times 365 which was 7,300, but he added five days for the five leap years which would occur in the 20-year period. So, on that day he had been prime minister for 7,305 days. I am sure the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East will be pleased to know