

*Army Benevolent Fund*

unanimous. We feel that the recommendations in this bill are good, that they will redound to the benefit of the returned men, and personally I see no reason why they should not receive the unanimous support of the house as they did in the committee.

Mr. PROBE: I wish briefly to support the remarks which have been made by the hon. member for Winnipeg South and the hon. member for Royal. A good deal of the credit for the work of the committee and the unanimity of the report is due to the fact that the submissions of the Legion and the other service men's organizations were concise and to the point, and based on actual experience of the work of the canteen fund committee following the first great war. There was of course a limitation in the terms of reference to the committee which prevented us from going into the matter of some uniformity of policy with respect to the disposal of canteen funds of the other two service organizations, the air force and the navy. I was glad that the minister referred to the fact that the committee has made a reference to the need for such legislation, and I trust it will not be forgotten, because the service men of all these organizations have an equal right to be considered twenty, thirty, forty or fifty years from now, or until that time when all canteen funds are exhausted.

There is a special feature of this bill which I think should be called to the attention of this committee. There is written into the bill itself a limited guarantee for some educational benefits to the children of needy veterans. These educational benefits are not placed on a competitive or scholarship basis, from the standpoint of academic standing, but rather on the basis of need, and therefore it will make it possible for needy children, especially of the deceased veterans, to receive an education which they might not otherwise be in a position to acquire. If there is one criticism of the veterans' charter it is the fact that while the returned man himself is looked after, and to a limited extent the widows of men killed in action, we have not held the federal government responsible for the passing on to the child of such education as would likely have been its right had the father lived to provide it.

I am glad it is specifically emphasized in section 9 of this bill that the educational rights of the children of needy or deceased veterans will be looked after. There is another thing that deserves commendation. There was some discussion as to whether or not we should have permanent force personnel on the continuing boards to administer this fund. We have

here a regulation which prevents employees of the federal government from taking an active part in the work of administering the fund, and I believe that provision will get the support of the public generally. The citizens of the country other than members of the civil service will be in a position to administer it.

There is one minor point which escaped me at the time it went through the committee, and the minister might consider it at another time. I refer to the interest rate of two and one-half per cent which is mentioned in subsection 3 of section 3. There may have been an explanation for it in the committee at the time, but if so I have forgotten it. The fund, I submit, should earn the same rate of interest that the government generally pays for its money.

Beyond that, the members of our group are in hearty agreement with the general scope and provisions of the bill. It looks to me as though we shall be able to administer the \$9 million odd left from the canteen fund operations to the benefit of the veterans and their families as a whole.

Mr. CHURCH: I am glad that the soldiers of all parties who sat on the committee have presented us with such a commendable bill. I happened to be on a similar committee that was set up after the last war and I moved a resolution at that time that the fund should be administered according to soldier population, so far as the soldiers were concerned, in the various provinces equitably. Looking back, I am sorry that the act that was then passed did not afford the public protection that is written into this bill, namely, public control over the whole fund. I think there was some criticism of the manner in which the fund was provincially administered, particularly in one or two areas in Saskatchewan. I am pleased to note that the auditor general has control of the fund by audit, but I should like to see one of the clauses, that relating to education of veterans' children, made a little less stringent, because many of these veterans' children work very hard in the summer to earn their fees. In the last few days we have seen in the newspapers pictures of some of them engaged in different forms of rather hard work.

On the whole, I wish to congratulate the committee and the house on the good work that has been done in connection with this bill. I think we ought to extend the principle and have similar cooperation in other directions. It would enhance the reputation of parliament before the people of the country as far as the conduct of the country's business is concerned.