

Air Marshal Breadner

parliamentary assistant, he had expressed the wish that the hon. member for Queens would continue in that capacity.

As to the hon. member for St. Antoine-Westmount (Mr. Abbott), as the house is aware, he has been parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance has expressed his readiness to free the hon. member from that position in order to allow him to act as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of National Defence. The hon. member has cordially agreed to assist the government by making the transfer in the manner described.

On motion of Mr. Mackenzie King the house adjourned at 5.45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 20, 1945

The house met at three o'clock.

WAR SERVICE GRATUITIES

PAYMENT TO NEXT OF KIN OR BENEFICIARY UPON DEATH OF SERVICE PERSONNEL

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Before the orders of the day are called, I should like to direct a question, if I may, to the Minister of Veterans' Affairs. It is this. Has the government given consideration to the claim that gratuities which would accrue to service personnel meeting death under conditions recognized as pensionable by the Canadian pension commission be paid to next of kin or the beneficiary under the deceased person's will? If so, will the government consider amending the war service gratuities legislation to give effect to the above suggestion?

Hon. IAN A. MACKENZIE (Minister of Veterans' Affairs): With reference to the first part of the question, I may tell my hon. friend that representations have been received from all over Canada dealing with the point he raises. Secondly, I may say that the matter is now receiving the very active consideration of the government. The third part, of course, I cannot deal with at the moment.

Mr. GRAYDON: May I ask the minister if it is possible to bring in some legislation this session? The matter is very urgent.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): As soon as the matter has been decided by council I shall be glad to apprise my hon. friend.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

RETIREMENT OF AIR MARSHAL L. S. BREADNER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask a question of the Minister of National Defence for Air. The retirement of Air Marshal L. S. Breadner appears to have prompted many rumours as to the underlying reasons for it. I should be glad to have the minister make a statement at this time clarifying the situation.

Hon. C. W. G. GIBSON (Minister of National Defence for Air): The hon. member was good enough to send me notice of his question. I agree that there have been some rumours in connection with the retirement of Air Marshal Breadner, and I should like to make it clear at this time that there has been no friction whatever between Air Marshal Breadner and myself or any members of the staff. Air Marshal Breadner had reached the highest post in the Royal Canadian Air Force, that of Chief of Air Staff, and on his retirement from that post some time ago was appointed Air Officer Commander in Chief overseas. At that time a somewhat unusual arrangement was made, that he would report, not through the usual channel but to the minister direct. When I took my present portfolio I recommended and the war committee approved that the usual channel should be followed again and that the reporting should go through the Chief of Air Staff here. That was a change in the arrangements under which Air Marshal Breadner had gone overseas. He was consulted in the matter and expressed his willingness to retire, and his retirement is being proceeded with. I may say that on his retirement he is to be given a step in rank to that of Air Chief Marshal; and in case there should be another flock of rumours starting, I would say that that in no way affects his pension rights. It is given to him in recognition and appreciation of the many years of distinguished service he has given the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): But the fact remains that he did not concur in the new arrangement.

Mr. GIBSON: I did not say that.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am saying it.

Mr. GIBSON: I would not say that.