

Inquiries of the Ministry

National Railways. My answer, in effect, was that the interpretation of rule 9 would not affect those in receipt of old age pension after January 1 of next year.

The supplementary question was as to whether the same answer could be given with respect to gratuities of the Canadian National Railways. I am now informed that gratuitous allowances are granted, under conditions, to employees who do not qualify for pension under the rules. These allowances are subjected to a means test, and the eligibility to receive an old age pension at seventy has been one reason to discontinue such allowances at that age. The number of gratuitants whose allowances have been discontinued for this reason is very small, namely seventeen, including two this year.

Mr. Knowles: May I ask a supplementary question? Is there in prospect any fundamental change in Canadian National Railways pensions, to be announced before the end of this year or, in other words, before the new old age pension plans come into effect?

Mr. Chevrier: I can only reply to that, as has already been stated in the house, that Canadian National Railways pension rules are now under reconsideration, and my understanding is that the brotherhoods and the railways are discussing changes to the pension rules. I have not been advised what they are; but when I am, I should be in a position to give information to the house.

INQUIRY FOR RETURN

LEGAL SERVICES—TORONTO, MONTREAL,
WINNIPEG

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, can the Prime Minister tell us now when the return passed as an order for return on April 30, regarding legal fees, will be brought down? The Prime Minister said he would have the matter looked into.

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): I did have it looked into, and there are still two or three matters about which further information is required. I hope, however, that it will not take more than a day or two to get that further information.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

REPORTED CONDITION OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN
TORONTO AREA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. W. Noseworthy (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the Minister of Labour? Has his attention been called [Mr. Chevrier.]

to the fact that unemployment in Toronto is now building up at a rate of over two thousand a week? If so, what steps is the government taking to relieve that situation?

Hon. Milton F. Gregg (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, our attention of course has been drawn to the fact of unemployment, and of employment, throughout Canada. I can report to the house that while there are small pockets of unemployed, particularly in central Ontario, on the whole the employment picture in Canada is exceptionally good at the present time.

CANADIAN FORCES ACT

TO PROVIDE FOR COMPENSATION, PENSIONS, ETC.,
TO MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES AND
ALLIED SERVICES

Hon. Brooke Claxton (Minister of National Defence) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the National Defence Act to provide for the payment of compensation in respect of the death or disability of persons employed in or with the public service of Canada while performing functions in relation to the Canadian forces, the defence research board or forces co-operating therewith; to amend the Defence Services Pension Act to permit the payment of a pension to an officer or man who has served in the Canadian forces for twenty years or more and to provide that the act shall continue to apply to a man who, having been promoted from the ranks, is granted a short service commission; to provide that persons who have accumulated pensionable service under the Defence Services Pension Act may be able to count that service under the Civil Service Superannuation Act when they retire from the forces to accept civil service appointments in the Department of National Defence; to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Act to provide continuing authority for that department to administer, on the same basis as in the past, the service estates of former members of the forces; to amend the Visiting Forces (United States of America) Act to provide for the attendance of civilian witnesses at American court-martial held in Canada; and to amend other statutes to make their terminology consistent with that of the National Defence Act.

Mr. Knowles: Explain.

Mr. Claxton: I could explain it in committee.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Dion in the chair.

Mr. Claxton: Mr. Chairman, hon. members will recall that at the first session of parliament in 1950 we enacted the National Defence Act. That act contained a comprehensive revision of all legislation related to defence, and also incorporated in one measure a single disciplinary code for the navy, the army and the air force.

Subsequently the various sections of that act have all been brought into force by proclamation, and the regulations of the three