

*Militia Pension Act*

permanent time, to be considered for pension purposes, should be time spent in experience in a branch of the forces which would be useful in the soldier's permanent career. Consequently when part V was drafted last year, and when it was enacted by the house, this provision took its present form, and in order to count for pension purposes non-permanent service had to be in the arm in which the soldier made his permanent career.

I should also point out that up to the amendment enacted last year this provision enabling a permanent force soldier to count non-permanent service on account of pension was available only to officers, and one of the amendments introduced last year was to make it available to other ranks. That was part of a carefully worked out plan for pensions for officers, warrant officers and other ranks of all three services. It was introduced in the house last year and enacted as part V of the Militia Pension Act. I must say frankly, as I said last night, that we should like to keep this provision as it is and see it in practice for a time before making changes. There are reasons for that. One is that this part applies not only to soldiers who entered the permanent force after April 1, 1946, but also to members of the permanent force at April 1, 1946, who may elect to come into this part and become subject to its provisions provided they make that election up to March 31, 1948. As yet we do not know how many members of the permanent force on April 1, 1946, if any, will take advantage of the election.

It does seem, however, on consideration and after discussing it with the officers of the three services, as if the number who will make that election will not be very great; so that if the proposal of the hon. member for Vancouver North is carried out, it would not have any very substantial retroactive effect. It would benefit, of course, those it covers among the men who have entered the force since April 1, 1946; but even there the number having non-permanent service in another arm would probably not be very great. In consequence, while we should have preferred to keep the act as it is, I am prepared to accept this suggestion on behalf of the government and will ask my colleague, the Secretary of State, to move the amendment.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I move:

That section 2 of Bill No. 5 be amended by deleting subparagraph (iv) as therein set out and substituting the following therefor:

(iv) One-fourth of the period of service counted as service in the non-permanent active militia, the reserve force, the auxiliary active air force, the Royal Canadian Air Force (auxiliary), the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve or the Royal Canadian Navy (Reserve);

[Mr. Claxton.]

if such service is not service that may be counted under subparagraph (v) of this paragraph; and . . .

Mr. KIDD: I should like to say a few words on the amendment. The mover and the seconder have not included the service of students and gentleman cadets at the Royal Military College or the students attending Royal Roads. The discussion yesterday was helpful and constructive, but I am a little bit surprised at the Secretary of State. If he reads *Hansard* of yesterday he will find that he has not gone far enough. It is not for me to press this point home; it is for him. In as kindly way as I can I want to say to the Secretary of State that this bill to amend the Militia Pension Act does not go far enough. If this amendment goes through in its present form I believe the minister will be discriminating against the cadets of the Royal Military College and Royal Roads. The minister has made one concession; I think he should go just a little further.

To explain my point let me say this. Royal Roads was not in existence prior to 1939, of course, but when a cadet of the Royal Military College joined the permanent forces, his services were accepted at once and without question. Take the case of a young man who served in the non-permanent forces, or in a C.O.T.C. He gave four years of service, which he would be allowed to count towards pension on the basis of one year for every two years he served. I believe any person who has been associated with the militia, anyone who has been a commanding officer, would prefer to have that cadet from the Royal Military College join his unit, after four years of training at that college, than any young man who had spent the same length of time in the non-permanent militia; and in saying that I do not wish to offend anyone who served in the militia.

I do not want to enlarge upon what has been said already, but as strongly as possible I am going to urge the government to go one step further. I believe they should let this matter stand in abeyance and bring in a further amendment inserting the words "Royal Military College and Royal Roads."

Mr. GILLIS: Many of us do not have copies of the amendment, and I should like the minister who moved it to explain exactly what it means. How does it affect the present section?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): It means that a man may count service in any branch of the reserve forces toward his pension in the permanent force. A man who had served in the reserve of the air force, for example, and