

*Militia Pension Act*

In other words, this is related directly to service of the kind that the man ultimately performs in the active force, and if we were to accept my hon. friend's suggestion it would be necessary, first, to make a brand new provision in the law changing the whole basis for taking this service in the non-permanent active militia into consideration as it has been in force since 1910. It would mean that we would have to say in the law that attendance at the Royal Military College or Royal Roads shall be deemed for purposes of the Pension Act to be service. We would then have to say that attendance at either of these two places shall not only be deemed to be service in a unit of the appropriate force but also be deemed to be service in the rank of second lieutenant, because that is a necessary feature of it too.

You would be changing the whole basis of the method of calculation which has been worked out and which was agreed to by the house last year and is now in effect.

I would point out that there is no more reason for accepting my hon. friend's argument and suggestion of counting attendance at the Royal Military College as service in a unit of the Canadian army than there would be, say, in connection with civil servants' pensions, for accepting as service, contributing to the length of service that has to be counted by the civil servant for pension purposes, the time spent at university or law school or at a school of mines preparing himself for his job in the public service.

The two situations are analogous and it would be quite out of the question to consider one rather than the other. I submit that both are unacceptable.

Finally, I should like to give the facts with regard to something which the hon. member for Nanaimo said today with regard to personnel at Royal Roads. As I understood him, he indicated that officers who had been at Royal Roads had at one time been allowed to count their service for pension purposes back to the time they were eighteen, if they subsequently joined the Royal Canadian Navy. Was that the point? I am sorry if I misunderstood my hon. friend, but I will give the situation as it is.

Mr. PEARKES: I did not say that.

Mr. CLAXTON: Under the Militia Pension Act that was in force until 1946, service for the purposes of calculating pension for an officer in the Royal Canadian Navy was defined by section 36, paragraph (e) (1) as including service in the force, in commissioned, warrant or midshipman rank, over the age of eighteen

[Mr. Claxton.]

years. The language used here supports the contention I have made, namely, that even in this case the man only counts his service, for the purpose of estimating his pension, from the time he is commissioned and over eighteen years of age. I submit, therefore, that the clause should be adopted.

Mr. PEARKES: After the close of great war I, in order to encourage those officers who had been in the non-permanent militia to enter into the permanent force, they were allowed to count their pensionable service in the non-permanent militia as two years, or one-half of the time.

Mr. CLAXTON: Yes.

Mr. PEARKES: May I ask why that has been changed to one-quarter now? Surely we want to encourage those men who were in the non-permanent militia before world war II to go into what is to be a largely increased active army. I should like to know what the point is in reducing the amount of benefit from one-half to one-quarter?

Mr. CLAXTON: That change was made last year by this house when it enacted part V of the act. The purpose of part V was to provide a system of pensions for the permanent force, or the active army, as we now call it. It would be similar in its provision to that for the civil service and the other services of Canada. I think in working it out it will be found that, by and large, the provisions regarding pensions that are now to be found in part V are fair and generous. But the point of all this is that anyone who enlisted and was a member of the permanent force prior to March 31, 1946, can either stay under the old pension provisions or, if he prefers and so elects by March 31, 1948, he can come under the new pension provisions, part V. The purpose of this amendment that we are putting before the house today is just to do one thing, namely, to make it clear that he has that election, that he has the choice either to stay under the old provisions or to come in under the new ones. We do not know how many men will come under the new provisions, but we imagine a considerable proportion of them will do so.

Mr. PEARKES: I am afraid the minister has not quite answered my question. I asked what the point was of reducing it from one-half to one-quarter.

Mr. CLAXTON: It was considered that part V, as it was drafted as a whole, provided a fair pension plan and that a quarter was a fair period of time to allow in respect of the