

sions of non-commissioned officers' widows. It is of the same character—class legislation. It may be that the officer should have higher pay than the private, but I see no reason whatever that provision for widows of privates should not be made just as much as provision for the widows of non-commissioned officers. It is no use saying on this particular point that it will be given consideration in the future. It seems to me that when we are making provision for widows in this bill this is the place to deal with the point raised by my hon. friend from Macleod; and, since as he says, only a few widows are involved, let us take care of them now, and in future make some provision for the payment of pensions, if that is necessary. I do not think that we should let this opportunity slip by and allow a certain number of this class of people to be neglected.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): Mr. Chairman, I desire to support this request. I think the minister and the house will remember a few days ago we had a little discussion on a similar matter connected with the Militia Pension Act. As long as any minister introduces amendments to this act to deal with a few cases we shall have petitions from those who are not taken care of. The minister knows very well that the application for an increase of pension in regard to the mounted police has brought forth demands from the old permanent militia force officers who have retired and are living on a very small pension. Those of us who have served at all know that the non-commissioned officer and the private are the men upon whom the success of our work is often dependent, and the way we have treated them in the past does seem unfair in that no pension has been given to that class which perhaps deserves just as much as the officers for the services they have rendered. I think the reputation of the mounted police force has been built up largely by the quality of the non-commissioned officers and privates. I should like to see this case considered favourably by the minister. I have no doubt whatever that it will bring demands from other sections of the forces, but the mounted police of the west have done just as much to put Canada on the map as any other section of our forces. Undoubtedly much of the good work accomplished in the past was due to the non-commissioned officers and privates, who, stationed at solitary posts, rendered magnificent service to this Dominion.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Of course, the men are receiving a pension.

Mr. COOTE: I am making an appeal to the minister on behalf of the widows of the

non-commissioned officers and men who served in western Canada in the pioneer days. The work which they did for the Dominion is not fully realized by people living in eastern Canada; but the testimony in their behalf in western Canada is almost universal. I am sure that the great bulk of the police work in western Canada was done by this very class of men, the non-commissioned officers and men. I am not trying in any way to detract from the record of the commissioned officers, but upon these non-commissioned officers and privates fell the brunt of the work of facing blizzards and going out on unknown trails to keep order among the Indians in the early days. Those men endured great hardships, and their pay was very small. Indeed, it was so small that any of these men who were married could not save anything for their wives. It is certainly a reflection on this country that no provision has been made for them. It may be that the matter needs consideration as to whether the privates and non-commissioned officers now in the force should be made to contribute, in part, to a pension fund if their widows are to be pensioned. But I think we might go back and deal with the widows of these old members of the force. That is the point I would emphasize. Before this bill proceeds further, I would like to ask the minister what is the pay of non-commissioned officers and privates now and how long it has been at the present rate.

Mr. LAPOINTE: The present pay has been in effect since 1924.

Mr. COOTE: What is the pay for a constable or non-commissioned officer?

Mr. LAPOINTE: I have not got the information here.

Mr. COOTE: I am asking for the information for the reason that if we knew the pay these men received the majority of the members of the committee, would, I am sure, be convinced that it was insufficient to enable them to save very much. If we cannot get the minister to amend the act to-day, I should like him at least to assure us that the matter will be carefully considered and that he will make a statement to the house at an early date.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I do not think it is altogether fair to say that we have been treating the mounted police in a parsimonious way. I could show my hon. friend letters and telegrams expressing gratefulness for the treatment which has been accorded them.

An hon. MEMBER: When?