

extremely highly qualified, and so perhaps a study of these particular problems does not move as rapidly as we would like. It is "in train", and certainly I am not in a position today, nor will I be in the next couple of weeks, to give an adequate answer to the hon. gentleman's representation.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): May I say I readily accept the minister's correction of the word I used. He had not said I impressed him, he had said I moved him. I am only too happy to accept the correction so as to be not only literally correct, but also because that is what I wanted to do. It really does not matter to me whether I impress him, but I should like to move him.

Perhaps I can take some consolation from what the President of the Treasury Board has now said, namely that a study of this matter is "in train". I know how complicated these pension matters are, as I have been working in this field as an amateur on the floor of this House for quite a few years. I know that every piece of pension legislation is extremely complicated and one has to look at the relations between any one piece of legislation and several others. But I do not think this problem is quite as complicated as the minister makes out.

If the minister will go back and read the statements he made when he announced the increase in pensions to retired civil servants, and I think the date was December 19, 1969, and if he will read all the debates that have taken place since, he will see that the one main argument advanced for not escalating the pensions of armed forces and RCMP personnel prior to age 60 was that this was not being done for public servants until age 60.

I have to say that in those days, although I made a case, I could not go very far with it because there was a certain logic to his position. Now, he has broken that position. It is no longer true that healthy civil servants retiring prior to age 60 do not get the escalation. It has been true right along that a public servant who is retired because of ill health and put on immediate pension gets the escalation. It is also true that an RCMP officer or a person from the armed forces who has to retire early because of ill health can get the escalation. We have a parallelism there.

Let us consider the superannuation of the healthy. A deputy minister or a public servant at any level can, under the provisions of this bill, retire between ages 55 and 60, and in certain other cases between 50 and 55. When that happens those people, despite their younger age, being under 60, qualify for annual escalation. All I am asking is that we be consistent and say that since we have changed the rules in respect of healthy public servants, let us change the same rule in respect of healthy members of the RCMP and the armed forces.

I have used the word "healthy" simply to imply, as I must, that those who are retired because of ill health have already been looked after. Let me say there are many instances in respect of these people where they have retired in good health but who cannot get other work, sometimes because of health or because of an unemployment situation such as exists today. Letters I

receive indicate there are a good many examples of suffering in this area. I know the general philosophy has been that these special provisions to enable RCMP and armed forces people to retire early presented a different story. They can retire at 50 or 51, or even under 50 if they have the right number of years of service, and since they were so young they could go back to work. Try to go back to work today.

My argument in the main rests on the principle of consistency, which I hope appeals to the President of the Treasury Board. We have changed the rules so far as public servants are concerned. I do not think the minister now has any leg to stand on if he does not change the rules for the others as well. I am glad this is "in train" as I suppose this is an accomplishment to have achieved that since March 30. I just hope that the train does not move too slowly.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, during the initial debate on this clause of the bill I drew the minister's attention to the plight of certain federal civil servants in the province of Newfoundland who came under the jurisdiction of the government of Canada as a consequence of the union of Newfoundland with Canada in 1949. Those people are covered under a special clause or term of union, I think clause 39.

When I brought the matter to the minister's attention originally he pointed out that this would require, under the terms of this clause, special action on the part of the government of Newfoundland. The minister said the initiative had to come from the province. He was sympathetic and said he would look into the situation.

Since that time the matter has been raised in the Newfoundland legislature. The government of that province quite properly responded by indicating it did not know of the new provisions of this act or the amendments now before the committee because they were still before the House of Commons. I should like the government, and particularly the President of the Treasury Board, to give us an assurance that when we pass this bill and it becomes law he will transmit this information to the government of Newfoundland with a view to correcting this anomalous situation which exists at the present time in that certain federal civil servants are excluded from the provisions of this bill as a consequence of term 39 of the union of Newfoundland with Canada.

There are a number of civil servants who are affected by this, and they are naturally quite concerned. They want equal rights with their fellow civil servants. They are concerned more particularly because the tenure of the government of Newfoundland has reached a constitutional limitation. The government has only until December of this year before there must be an election. I am afraid that this matter might get lost in the shuffle. I, therefore, ask the President of the Treasury Board if he is prepared to give this commitment to the committee and to those civil servants affected? I hope the minister or one of his officers will get in touch with the Newfoundland government to advise it of the changes in the Superannuation Act, suggesting that the Newfoundland