

Canadian Forces Act

nature. Only one amendment to the Visiting Forces (North Atlantic Treaty) Act is proposed. It is consequential upon the enactment at the last session of parliament of the Crown Liability Act and would place visiting military forces in the same position as the Canadian forces in respect of claims for damages by the public.

The proposed amendment to the Senate and House of Commons Act would enable members of this house and of the other place who are members of the reserve forces of any of the services to perform their military duties without loss of sessional allowance. The present provision of the act relating to this matter is restricted in its application to service with the army reserves.

The proposed amendment to the Canadian Forces Act, 1950, would amend a provision of that act relating to the application of the Defence Services Pension Act to members of the forces who were enrolled for the purpose of serving in the Korean theatre. The amendment would enable the governor in council to permit such members who have decided to follow a military career to count their Korean service for pension purposes.

Mr. Chairman, the foregoing matters are of considerable importance to our defence forces and I, therefore, commend this resolution to the committee for its favourable consideration.

Mr. Pearkes: Mr. Chairman, this would seem to be another of those omnibus bills, embracing amendments to five other acts of parliament, which are becoming so dear to the heart of the minister. We on this side of the house feel that this is a clumsy and unusual way of dealing with amendments to acts of parliament, but it would seem to be a method to which the Department of National Defence has now become accustomed and I can only say it is their funeral, not ours.

It must be, I should think, extremely complicated and difficult for the officers of the department to find if there are amendments to bills of such a wide range in dealing with so many different subjects as are dealt with under one amending bill. In one case we have amendments to the Defence Services Pension Act, and then we have amendments to the Visiting Forces Act, matters which are not related in any respect at all. Amendments to the Senate and House of Commons Act bear no relation whatever to the amendments which we believe will be introduced in this act.

It is now becoming the custom of the minister to introduce amendments of this nature and it has been going on for the last three or four years. There does not seem

[Mr. Campney.]

to be any solution to this. We have raised our voices in objection to this type of omnibus bill in the past but our warnings have not been heeded. As to the various amendments which are to be introduced to these various acts, we have not the bill before us. Until we have it, it is extremely difficult for anybody to comment on the actual details of the bill. It is therefore probably better to leave any detailed discussion until the bill is actually presented to us.

I notice, however, that there are to be amendments to the Defence Services Pension Act which will deal with the succession duties. For a number of years past widows of servicemen who have contributed toward their pension have been faced, when the pensioner has died, with having to meet heavy succession duties. It has always been the hope of the regular forces of this country that it might have been possible to relieve the widows of the obligation to pay those succession duties.

The moneys which have been paid in by the members of the forces have been a contribution made over a great many years. This contribution has been made by the pensioner in the belief that his family would be secure when death overtook him. A matter of some ten or fifteen years ago a decision was made that pensions were to be subject to succession duties. This amendment does not relieve the widow of the obligation to pay those succession duties but it is a measure which makes their payments a little bit easier. When death overtakes the pensioner the widow is in a difficult and embarrassing position. While I should like to have seen the whole of the succession duties eliminated, nevertheless the fact that the period for payment of those succession duties is going to be extended over a number of years will help to tide the widow over that difficult time.

As to the other amendment, I do not think it is necessary to make much comment now except to say that I should like to get a little bit more information as to the relation of members of the House of Commons who are serving in the reserve forces of this country. By this amendment which is to be introduced do we understand that a member of the House of Commons, while carrying out his duties in the house, will also at the same time be able to carry out his duties in the reserve forces? Is this amendment now making it possible for a member of the House of Commons on the same day to draw pay for being in attendance in the House of Commons and also to draw pay for attending a parade or other training activities in the