

Canadian Forces Act

recruitment of the type of people we wanted, men in their middle thirties, who under normal circumstances could not have served 20 years before reaching the compulsory retirement age. As an inducement they were given a pension after 10 years without the one-third deduction until they should attain the age of 65 years. That was done for the benefit and welfare of the services.

It was not a question of R.M.C. graduates as against other officers because, as I pointed out, of the 145 who were retired under the reorganization, 6 were R.M.C. graduates and over that whole two-year period of reorganization I believe only 20 R.M.C. graduates were enrolled. It was a question of trying to reconstitute the forces on the best basis possible having regard to the qualification of the people available and of obtaining the officers required by the services.

I would also point out that those coming into the services under part V for purposes of qualifying for pension are not permitted to count their war service. Those gentlemen who were retired with the deduction from their pensions of one-third until they reached the age of 65 were permitted to count their war service as qualifying service; so, in order to understand this problem, you have to go a little deeper into the pension set-up than I fear the hon. member has done. You cannot simply say that one particular group has more service than another in the case of people retired on grounds of economy or efficiency, or that there are benefits under parts I to IV that are not available at present under part V, because there are also benefits under part V of the act which were not available under parts I to IV.

It is a question of balancing advantages and disadvantages, and the only object of the Defence Services Pension Act and of the administrators of that act is to try and strike a fair balance. I believe that on the whole that has been done. I do not believe, from my own knowledge and from looking into the question which the hon. member has raised, and indeed from looking into the cases, that any individual has suffered hardship or been treated with unfairness. You can take any pension case and differentiate it from another, but basically I believe the administration of the act as it is now constituted has been fair. The officers to whom the hon. member referred had the right of election and, having weighed the advantages and disadvantages, what they really did was to elect to come under part V on the same basis as all others coming under that part.

Mr. Gillis: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to continue that argument, but there is one point with reference to it which the minister missed. He referred to the 145 officers who were retired at that time and who are now under discussion. But they were compelled to retire. They had no alternative and I believe that distinction should be made. Whether the hon. member for York South intended to imply what the minister inferred from his remarks, I do not know, but I would just like to say that as a general rule good field officers do not make good parade ground officers if there is no war on. That may have had something to do with it.

I am going to draw to the attention of the minister some grievances which I hope he has not forgotten. I have mentioned them before in relation to this pension set-up as it affects officers. While the present bill does not attempt to amend the whole National Defence Act, it has reference to this particular matter. I am referring now to superannuation pension contribution made by officers who have died while in the services, and I want to remind the minister that when we were amending the original act a few years ago, and again since then, I brought to his attention a particular case which can be repeated over and over again. Evidently, not very much attention has been paid to it because there has been no reference to it at this time. In Canada today the services are a career. They can no longer be looked upon as an organization which you go into for war purposes, your main desire being then to get out. Today service in the armed forces is being made extremely attractive. Boys are being enticed in. A great many of them are going to make a career of it. They are going into the permanent forces, and those forces are going to be permanent for some time, in my judgment.

This superannuation scheme works in this way. An officer or any other member of the personnel may die within the service. The case I brought to the attention of the minister—and it can be repeated—had to do with Captain Edward Rowe. He served ten years in the army, with four or five years' combat service. He came back and was stationed in Ottawa. During the time of his service in Ottawa he had a heart attack and died in the service. When his contributions were returned to his widow, the income tax department deducted \$600 income tax assessment from his contributions while he was in the service.

He intended to make the army a career. He left a widow and three children. Despite all of the veterans legislation there is no redress for that widow under any of it. She