

*Canadian Forces Act*

responsibilities not only to the men who are in the services, but to the people who are back behind the men, who after all are suffering the anxiety of the incidence of war. Meanwhile, will the minister now tell us something about this whole matter of increasing allowances at least temporarily?

**Mr. Claxton:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Lethbridge. With regard to a cost of living bonus, or something of that character, I should point out that it has been the policy of the government generally not to pay a cost of living bonus which was directly related to the cost of living index, but to make adjustments from time to time in the pay of civil servants and the armed forces, and that matter is receiving continuous consideration.

With regard to the pay and allowances of the armed forces, immediately following the last war, in 1946, a committee was set up representative of the three services, the Department of Finance, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labour, to draw up a new pay scale for all the services. As far as possible it was to be on a uniform basis, and an effort was made to relate the pay of each rank and trade in the services to what a man doing a corresponding job and having a corresponding background would get in industry. To arrive at what he would get in industry that committee looked at salaries and wages in the eight leading industries in Canada, made a very thorough study and arrived at a pay scale which was brought into effect for all three services on a uniform basis. Since then the rates of pay have been increased on three separate occasions, generally corresponding to the increases to the civil service. As I indicated before, our effort is to see that service personnel receive the equivalent of the salary or wage for a similar job in civilian life. By that I mean when you take into account his pay, allowances, pension, food, clothing, hospital, medical and dental services, personal transportation and in some cases accommodation, he is getting the same as he would get in civilian life. Valuing these things which are given in kind quite realistically, in point of fact he does better than a man would do in an equivalent job in civilian life, in so far as you can make them equivalent. The only reason he does not appreciate that he does somewhat better is that so much of it is given in kind, but I can assure the hon. member that the incidence of the cost of living on service personnel is subject to continuous consideration.

The hon. member for Kamloops made another observation which I should deal with.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

He suggested that the form of the statute might be changed so as to have each amendment placed in a separate bill to amend each of the different statutes. This bill, which has 29 clauses, actually amends 25 statutes. Many of the amendments are like the substitution of the word "army" for "military" or something of that kind. They are quite formal. As the hon. member will appreciate, to have each of 25 statutes go through some twelve stages in this house and the other place would amount to a great deal of work and lead to some delay. However, I should tell him that this is a matter of some importance. After the enactment of the National Defence Act in 1950 we decided that where it was necessary to have an amending statute relating to defence it would be done in one single bill each year, to be called the Canadian Forces Act, 1951, 1952, 1953 and so on, which would make it very convenient for us and for hon. members in following through defence matters. That has been the practice in the United Kingdom and I think they find it works very well there. However, we will consider his point further.

**Mr. Fulton:** I appreciate what the minister has just said with regard to the matter of form which I raised, and also the fact that it is going to be considered; but I should like to go back to the other point with regard to the return of Canadian troops from Korea to Canada. I assure the minister I appreciate fully the difficulty which he has spoken of in organizing that type of welcome. I just want to put forward this suggestion. I do not want to ride a horse until it is dead, but I suggest that the department take under consideration asking the auxiliary services to provide welcoming committees because, while I should like to see a great big welcome, the fact is that properly done it does not take a great many people to give that atmosphere of warmth and convince the troops that there are people really glad to see them back here. I think that first impression of a warm greeting is so important. I believe the auxiliary services and the Red Cross might be the best qualified actually to undertake that work.

**Mr. Claxton:** Yes. I should answer the hon. member for Peel now. On the orders of the day he asked me if there were any Canadian prisoners of war. I told him that as far as my recollection went there were not any. There are no known prisoners of war. There are two missing but we have no information that they are prisoners.

**Mr. Crestohl:** I should like to address myself to one or two statements made by the hon. member for York West a few moments