

Some very unfortunate cases have resulted where the person affected was not subsequently informed in time to make another election within the required period. In order to give a reasonable time in which to make an election this amendment would provide that, for this purpose, a year be given in advance of as well as 30 days following retirement.

Hon. Mr. Hackett: Is that retroactive?

Hon. Mr. Golding: Yes, I think it will be.

This clause also provides that where a participant of the scheme purported to elect within a year prior to retiring then this should be regarded as an election and it would be possible by paying the necessary contributions for him to resume his status as a participant if he took action to do so within six months of the coming into force of this amendment. Where the death of any of these persons occurred prior to the end of this six-month period there would be provision for the payment of the death benefit less the contributions which would have been made up to the time of death. The same applies to elections made within 60 days following retirement.

Clause 8 of the bill also deals with the Supplementary Death Benefit Scheme, but this amendment concerns those who elected not to participate under the scheme at the time of its introduction in accordance with the provisions of section 52 of the act. This section provided that contributors under Part I of the act, which deals with pensions, were given the right to elect not to participate under Part II under which supplementary death benefits are made available. It also provides that this election is irrevocable even if the employee leaves the service and is subsequently re-employed. The same provision applies to members of the armed forces who are re-engaged or subsequently become civil servants.

This restriction has been most difficult to administer, particularly in the cases of married women who return to the service under different surnames and in a different locality or department and also where there are two or more persons of the same name. If no change were to be made it would be necessary to set up a large administrative staff to cope with this without any prospect of complete success, as there are 34,000 persons who made these elections out.

It is proposed that the irrevocable feature of these elections should not apply in the case of re-employment in the Public Service or re-engagement in the armed forces or of a person leaving the armed forces and becoming

a contributor under the Public Service Superannuation Act after the amendment comes into force. The amendment accordingly provides that the irrevocable nature of the elections made under section 52 of the Public Service Superannuation Act apply only to persons who continue to be employed in the Public Service or as members of the regular forces substantially without interruption following the coming into force of the amending legislation.

In concluding this description of the provisions contained in the proposed amendments, I should like to mention that they have all been recommended to the minister by his Advisory Committee, which is made up of 12 persons representative of the official and staff sides of the Public Service who have been appointed by the Governor in Council on the minister's recommendation after consultation with the National Council of the Public Service of Canada.

I may say that I have read carefully the discussion which took place on this bill in the House of Commons. I find that 10 of the Opposition members spoke on the bill and everyone was pleased with the legislation as far as it went; but on the other hand they were all anxious to see these amendments go further. However, as I say, they were all satisfied with the bill as it is and the Government members who spoke on the bill were of the same opinion.

Now, honourable senators, as Canadians, and particularly as members of Parliament, we are proud of our Public Service.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Golding: It seems to me that we can show our appreciation of the Public Service, of its loyalty, efficiency and so on, by simply accepting this bill as it is and by passing it without going to committee at all. I would suggest that we do that.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: May I ask the honourable senator if he can supply any information regarding the number of civil servants in Newfoundland who will come under this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Golding: No, I have not got that information.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: A further question arises as a result of some discussion in the Standing Committee on Finance this session as to the status of the superannuation fund itself. Is the honourable senator in a position to say whether or not the amendment proposed by this bill would have the effect of weakening or strengthening the status of