

Pensions

Mr. Hopkins: As a member of this house who has a large military establishment in his constituency, I should like on behalf of the armed forces to express appreciation to the Associate Minister of National Defence for accepting this suggestion. During the past few months I have received a number of letters on this subject from people in the armed forces, particularly from those based at Camp Petawawa. This correspondence has been passed on to the associate minister. On their behalf I wish to thank him for putting forth a change in the legislation, so that members of the armed forces who will be retiring shortly will be given credit in their pension plan for active service during World War II.

● (8:30 p.m.)

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 41 to 50 inclusive, agreed to.

On clause 51.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of National Defence will be moving the following amendment:

That clause 51 be amended by inserting, immediately after line 33, the following paragraph:

"(db) prescribing the period within which and the procedure by which any person dissatisfied with any decision or direction made by the minister under section 12 or subsection (3) of section 13 may appeal that decision or direction to the Treasury Board and authorizing the Treasury Board to make any decision or direction in relation thereto that might have been made by the minister under those provisions;"

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, I so move.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw to the minister's attention an anomaly that pertains to the amount of money that can be earned by either a former serviceman or former mounted police officer who subsequently enters civil service employment. The minister indicated to the committee that these people would be allowed to earn at least up to \$4,218 per year without there being any deduction from the salary in their new position.

I would like to draw to the minister's attention that a sergeant major in the R.C.M.P. who has served 35 years and retired, would be entitled to a pension of \$5,912.90, and we understood from the evidence of Dr. George Davidson, given to the committee, that he would not suffer any reduction in that \$5,912.90 when going into the public service. In short, there is a discrepancy of approximately \$694 between those two amounts.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, I have received the same letter as my hon. friend with respect to the position of the R.C.M.P. What Dr. Davidson said in committee, and Mr. Clark as well—and this is something I have looked at pretty carefully—was that the R.C.M.P. under regulations were treated the same as people in the armed services under section 17(2). This does not guarantee that people have the same amount of pensions in the R.C.M.P. as they have in the armed services, so that if an O.R. in the R.C.M.P. got a higher pension he would still be exempted under 17(2) because he is treated the same as an O.R. in the armed services.

I undertook at the committee, and I am willing to undertake again, that the regulations which the government will promulgate as a result of the passing of this legislation will be such that no officer entering the civil service will be treated any worse than a staff sergeant, which is the present highest level of pension for an O.R. coming into the government service. I would not like at this point to undertake anything beyond that in saying that officers will be treated better. The position of the R.C.M.P. in comparison with people in the armed services will continue to be reviewed.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): I have just two sentences to utter. The minister knows that I wish what he proposes were in the legislation. I ask him to take very seriously what he said to the committee, that what he proposes is the minimum, and I ask him to give with the greatest degree of generosity. One third sentence: I think generosity should indicate that these armed force pensioners should not be penalized in any way whatever.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member knows how generous this government and I are.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 52 to 57 inclusive agreed to.

On clause 58.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of National Defence will move the following amendment:

That clause 58 be amended by inserting, immediately after line 18, the following subsection:

"(2a) The Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing the period within which and the procedure by which any person dissatisfied with any decision or direction made by the minister under this section may appeal that decision or direction to the Treasury Board and authorizing the Treasury Board to make any decision or direction in relation thereto that might have been made by the minister under this section."