

I should like to say one more word. With regard to the suggestion that the viewpoint of the members of the armed forces should be ascertained, it would be desirable to obtain their opinion if there was any manner in which that could be done; we would be very much in favour of it. We are not anxious to bring about anything which the armed forces would not want. We simply feel that it would be an advantage to them and that is the only reason we suggest this. If the suggestion is overwhelmingly opposed by the members of the armed forces themselves we would not consider it.

Mr. QUELCH: I should like to ask the minister if it would not be possible to hold this in abeyance until the opinion of the soldiers has been obtained.

Hon. Mr. LAPOINTE: I hardly think so. As you know, these benefits were extended to the members of the regular forces at the time of the Korean conflict. It was brought in in this manner because of the changes in the composition of the 25th brigade in Korea which started off by being a brigade regarded as a special force on 18 months enlistment for the purposes of the Korean campaign. Eventually the special force as such disappeared through the members of it being either discharged upon termination of their enlistment, or through disability, or voluntarily transferring to the regular force, and signing an enlistment for a three-year period in the regular force. Therefore, the whole of the Korean force was eventually composed of members of the regular force, and this amendment was then brought into the Veterans Benefit Act, so that we could give the people who enlisted to go to Korea and serve there the same privileges as had been given to the members of the original special force and to World War II veterans; but through the change in the composition of the force, all these people were now regular force, and the amendment was made in the manner in which it now appears in the Act. It was never the intention that members of the regular forces who enlisted at any time and served in peacetime, and who might never be called upon to serve in a theatre of operation, should enjoy benefits under legislation designed for veterans who served in a theatre of operation; that is why this amendment is being brought in. None of these people are in a theatre of operation any longer. The reason the cut-off date has been placed on the first of July, 1955, was in order that everyone who enlisted into the regular force would have due notice that this benefit would cease on the first of July. Undoubtedly it would mean that for a short period, there will be, as Mr. Brooks pointed out, some members of the force to whom this Act will apply, and others to whom it will not, but that applies in many other cases in the armed services. One illustration which occurs to me, for instance, is the Defence Services Pension Act. Their conditions of pension are different depending on the time at which they joined the regular force. The old timers who might still be in the defence services have conditions of pension which are different from those who enlist now. That is bound to happen in view of changing conditions of service in any armed service.

The CHAIRMAN: As I understand it, Mr. Minister, the idea is that we are taking away from the Department of Veterans Affairs any obligation they have to contribute—to, in effect, at present, a peace-time occupation—and what may be done with regard to unemployment insurance it is thought should be left to the Department of Labour and the Department of National Defence. That is, it is their business, and we should not mix in it as the Department of Veterans Affairs. It seems to me that is a reasonable attitude to take. I remember very well when this unemployment insurance scheme was being set up and the suggestion was made to bring bank employees into the scheme. They said, "This is a scheme to help support the fund, and not to help us." Members of the armed forces might feel the same way about it. I am quite satisfied if this is carried, and everyone is under unemployment insurance who is in the armed