

Children of War Dead

to a university or college the educational institutions at which a student could attend. A student had to pass a matriculation examination at high school, and a girl, for instance, who wished to take a stenographic course was prohibited from receiving any assistance, or a boy or girl who wished to attend some craft or vocational school that was not a technical college was prohibited from taking the advantages offered under this act. We had hoped that some improvement might be made in that regard.

As a matter of fact, in regard to the bill before the house, I remember the minister suggesting that it was quite possible that certain adjustments would have to be made. I am satisfied that what he had in mind at that time, after listening to the suggestions of many of the members, was not merely that children over twenty-one years of age, who had been cut off from pensions for various reasons, should be included, or that children of the V.A.D. should be included. I am satisfied that the minister, after listening to recommendations by many members of the committee, must have felt that other amendments could and should be made.

I am not going to take up the time of the house to any greater extent except to say again that I was disappointed in the limited amendments that we have to this bill. The bill affects only 25 persons and while it is important in itself as far as these 25 persons are concerned it does seem to me that it does not go as far as one would expect in a bill of this kind. These children have waited for a good many years from 1946 to 1953, which is quite a long time in the life of any school child and I have not the least doubt that while we were waiting for an act of this kind to be put through many children of veterans lost the opportunity entirely of receiving an education.

The Canadian Legion had this in mind when it granted scholarships to children of a great many of our soldiers who died overseas. The I.O.D.E. too has been granting scholarships following not only this war but the last war also and on the same basis but not of course to the same extent as under Bill No. 236 which we passed last year. There are certain other questions which I would like to ask when this bill comes before the committee but these are my comments on it at the present time.

Mr. R. R. Knight (Saskatoon): Mr. Speaker, in view of the unanimity in the house in the acceptance of this bill and in view of the small number of people it affects, I do not propose to make a speech in regard to the matter, except to say that I personally

welcome the bill and I think I can say that that is the opinion of every member of my party.

The last speaker has been critical of the bill in that it did not in a sense provide sufficient funds. He modified that criticism later, but I think there is one criticism that is valid, and that is that the bill has been brought down too late for a good many people. In other words, had the bill been brought down three years ago more people would have enjoyed its benefits, benefits which will now be denied them owing to the tardiness in implementing this bill, and because they are now over age.

However, in general we welcome this amending bill as we welcomed the previous bill passed on May 14 last. Each is after all an extension or widening of the scope of the very fine program of educational benefits for veterans initiated and carried out by this government and by the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have met a lot of young people who have nothing but praise for that particular scheme and I like to pass on a word of praise when it is deserved.

The purpose of this amendment is to extend the provisions and the benefits of this bill to include more young people. It is unfortunate that not more than 25 people, which is the figure that has been mentioned, are going to benefit. Perhaps it should go further in extending assistance to veterans, but I will not discuss that at the moment. Where a soldier has died the benefits of this bill are extended to his children, benefits which he himself might have enjoyed had he lived. It is a step in the right direction. Of course, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, any bill which extends, as this one does, aid to people in order to help them obtain education is a good bill as far as I am concerned, and when I say aid in the matter of education I mean such aid as can be provided by the federal government without in any way interfering with provincial autonomy in education.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): I cannot let this bill pass without having a word to say, but before I proceed with my remarks I want to congratulate the parliamentary assistant on his appointment. This is the first opportunity I have had of doing so.

We are very pleased to see this amendment brought before the house, for the amendment was suggested by Legion representatives who made proposals to the cabinet on November 10 of this year. I am glad the government has seen fit to accept at least