

Veterans Benefit Act

parliament since the outbreak of the Korean hostilities in 1950, in order to entitle Canadians who served with the United Nations in these operations to appropriate veterans benefits and privileges.

On April 4, 1951, as hon. members will recall, I explained that the legislation which was being introduced at that time—that was the Veterans Benefit Act of 1951—would not include all the benefits given to veterans of world war II. The situation then was very far from being static, and the government felt it advisable that some degree of flexibility and elasticity in regard to benefits to members of the special force should be maintained, and that legislation in regard to certain of the benefits should not be placed permanently on the statute books until such time as we had a much clearer picture of the situation.

As I said, this statement was made on the introduction of the Veterans Benefit Act of 1951. This act was extended in 1952 and in 1953 by two short acts. The Veterans Benefit Act of 1951, as the house will recall, entitled the veterans of Korean operations to certain benefits, while as regards other benefits the act authorized the governor in council to grant entitlement by order in council. Generally speaking, this flexible arrangement followed the practice in developing veterans legislation during and after world war II.

Now, the fighting in Korea having ceased, it seems appropriate to enact legislation in a form which, if it cannot be described as final, is as much so as any veterans legislation can be. That is, it is intended to meet present needs of the veterans in these operations for rehabilitation compensation for disabilities and other social protection established as a result of experience acquired during the last two world wars.

In considering the present bill, Mr. Speaker, it should be remembered that while in 1950 a group of men was specially enlisted for the Korean operation in what was called then the special force, over the whole period of the operations the majority of those serving in Korea were men on a regular engagement; that is, members of the regular force. A large number of these remained in the service. The rehabilitation problem is in many respects different in its nature and scope from that which followed world war II.

The bill which hon. members have before them for consideration covers all the legislation pertaining to Korean veterans. That is, it re-enacts in statutory form all the legislation passed by order in council under the authority of the Veterans Benefit Act relating to Korean veterans with the exception of war

veterans allowances which was made available in 1952 when the War Veterans Allowance Act itself was amended.

After world war I and world war II, cut-off dates were established for the various types of benefit after which time service did not entitle a man to the particular benefits. In connection with the Korean operations the cut-off date set for all benefits is October 31, 1953. This was announced to the house during the session of last fall. To be eligible for any benefit a serviceman must have served in or departed for a theatre of war prior to July 27, 1953, which was the date of the cease-fire, and the cut-off date is October 31, 1953. This is provided for in this bill.

As regards gratuities and re-establishment credits, under the Veterans Benefit Act, fifty cents per day is paid for each day's service in a theatre of operation, the same provision as for world war II. This forms the basic gratuity. A similar amount is available as a re-establishment credit. There has been no change in the principle of paying supplementary gratuities based on seven days' pay and allowances for 183 days of service in a theatre of operations, or a portion thereof, the same as applied during world war II.

Hon. members may be interested to note that as of December 31, 1953, gratuities in the amount of \$5,165,396.11 had been paid to members of the forces who had served in Korea and to the dependents of those who died in service. Re-establishment credits in the amount of \$3,283,786.50 have been set up for members of the forces with similar service. These credits average \$175.67. In the same period a sum of \$1,267,975.29 had been used by veterans as re-establishment credits.

The Veterans Rehabilitation Act has also been made available to Korean veterans. Entitlement to training follows the same general principles as after world war II. Training may be either vocational, undergraduate or postgraduate and an extension of the period of training normally equal to the period of service may be earned because of scholastic achievement. As of December 31, 1953, 36 veterans were taking vocational training; 45 veterans were taking university training; 73 veterans had completed vocational training; 3 had completed university training; 42 had withdrawn from vocational training; and 14 had withdrawn from university training. There is a provision in this bill for awaiting returns allowances identical with those that existed after world war II.

The provisions of the Pension Act have also been made available to Korean veterans by order in council. Hon. members may be interested in certain figures with regard to