

Pensions

• (8:20 p.m.)

On clause 19.

Mr. Benson: In conformity with the request of the committee that provision be made for appeal from decisions of the Minister of Finance in certain circumstances where no appeal is at present provided, I should like to offer this amendment:

That Bill C-193, an act to amend the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, the Defence Services Pension Continuation Act, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act, the Diplomatic Service (Special) Superannuation Act, the Intercolonial and Prince Edward Island Railways Employees' Provident Fund Act and the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition Act, be amended as follows:

(1) by inserting, immediately after line 11 on page 26 thereof, the following paragraph:

"(1d) prescribing the period within which and the procedure by which any person dissatisfied with any decision or direction made by the minister under paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 11, 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. Bell (Carleton): It would have to be moved by the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Benson: Then it will be moved by my colleague the Minister of National Defence.

An hon. Member: Does he agree?

Mr. Hellyer: I so move.

Mr. McCleave: On behalf of the official opposition I wish to thank the Minister of National Revenue for adopting a suggestion which originally came from the hon. member for Carleton and which was presented to the committee by the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich and myself. We think this is a reasonable way of dealing with appeals, that is, by referring them to Treasury Board. However, we would suggest to the minister that the experience relating to this amendment and a subsequent amendment be examined in a few years time with a view to setting up a different type of tribunal, should this seem desirable.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 39 inclusive agreed to.

On clause 40—*Computation of length of service.*

Mr. Knowles: Perhaps the Minister of National Revenue would like me to call a halt

[Mr. Benson.]

at this point, so that he can indicate to the committee what it is that clause 40 does. Is this not the clause dealing with the anomaly which now exists affecting service personnel who are not allowed to count their wartime service for pension purposes when they retire?

Mr. Benson: That is true. This is particularly important this year when a great many servicemen who enlisted during the second world war complete 25 years service. Although they enlisted during that war and continued in the service, they could not count their wartime service toward their pension benefits. This clause has been included so that these people may, deservedly I believe receive their full pension benefits for wartime as well as peacetime service.

Mr. Knowles: It is true, is it not, that if this legislation is passed in the other place and receives assent within the next week or two it will be in effect this very year?

Mr. Benson: That is true. As I say, it is important because this year a large number of servicemen will have completed 25 years service.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Many hon. members have made representations on this subject and I think all are gratified that this injustice has been rectified.

Mr. Barnett: Some of us have been receiving a large number of representations about this question of wartime service and pension benefits. I have also received representations—and I confess I have not been able to understand them very well—about differences in arrangements as between members of the three former elements of the armed forces. Could the minister give us an assurance, or, better still, could the Minister of National Defence give us an assurance that these amendments will take care of the situation we have been hearing about recently?

Mr. Hellyer: Yes, this amendment applies equally to the three branches of the armed forces. It is in my opinion long overdue. This has been the subject of one of the major complaints I have received from men who have served in the armed forces and whose careers began in wartime service. I should like to say that this amendment was recommended to the Minister of National Revenue by the defence department and in particular by the associate minister who has been piloting it through its various stages before its inclusion in the bill.