

Veterans Rehabilitation Act

and the payments for 1947 will be made as though the act had not been amended at that time. It will result in some additional amount going to the farmers as compared with what they would get under the amendment of last year; and, since the act has been administered on the other basis ever since 1939 and has given general satisfaction, we do not think this change should be made. Therefore we are asking to have it amended in order that payments may continue to be made on the old basis.

These are the chief amendments being made. As is indicated, the others are for purposes of clarification, and I think they can be better discussed when we are considering the bill in committee.

Mr. BENTLEY: Last year the act was amended to permit the payment of prairie farm assistance to those operating co-operative farms. Has that been carried out this year?

Mr. GARDINER: No change is being made in that connection. It is left as it was last year.

Mr. BENTLEY: I ask the question because today I was informed that the Matador co-operative farm is not receiving those payments, on the ground that it is a co-operative. I should like the minister to verify that, if he will, because it is a serious situation.

Mr. GARDINER: I can get that information before the bill is brought down, and we can discuss it then.

Resolution reported, read the second time and concurred in.

Mr. GARDINER thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 204, to amend the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, 1939.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

VETERANS REHABILITATION ACT

EXTENSION OF ALLOWANCE PROVISIONS

Hon. MILTON F. GREGG (Minister of Veterans Affairs) moved the second reading of Bill No. 200, to amend the Veterans Rehabilitation Act.

Mr. BROOKS: Will the minister give a short explanation of the bill?

Mr. GREGG: I do not wish to add anything to what I said on the resolution Friday evening, except that, following second reading, I shall move that it be referred to the committee on veterans affairs.

Mr. A. J. BROOKS (Royal): I do not propose to say very much on this bill at this time, since it is to be referred to the committee on veterans affairs. When the minister was speak-

[Mr. Gardiner.]

ing the other day I understood him to say the bill was intended to correct certain anomalies and confictions; I think those were his words.

At the outset I may say I am in agreement with the principle of the bill in practically all its aspects. There is one anomaly, however, that I think should be dealt with briefly tonight. That is the situation of members of the merchant marine as far as educational benefits are concerned. On numerous occasions we have urged that the young men who served in the merchant marine should receive the same benefits as those who served in the other branches of the services, and I believe that this is an anomaly which the minister and the veterans affairs committee might very well deal with when the bill is under consideration.

Another anomaly, as I think I may call it, has to do with the South African nurses. We remember that at first these nurses were not given the benefits which were granted to the other nurses who went overseas, as the result of a certain situation that arose in South Africa. Later they were granted those benefits; but I have been informed that certain nurses who served in South Africa did not return home but married in England and other parts of the world. Because those nurses did not return to Canada they have not been able to obtain benefits under either the War Service Grants Act or the rehabilitation act, and I think this is something which should receive consideration.

Then I have a letter before me from a Canadian doctor who was in the United States when war broke out. He came back to Canada desiring to join the Canadian forces but was rejected on physical grounds. He returned to the United States and served with the United States forces in the south seas for nearly three years. He then returned to Canada, but not being able to set up a practice, returned to the United States and took out his first citizenship papers, but not being satisfied again returned to Canada. Because he served in the United States army and took out papers as a United States citizen he cannot obtain rehabilitation benefits from our Department of Veterans Affairs. Because he was a Canadian citizen during the period of his service with the United States he cannot obtain benefits from the United States department, and I think this is an anomaly. In his letter the doctor says he knows of other cases of the kind, so that I think this is another matter which should receive some attention.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, this bill will be before the veterans affairs committee, so it is