

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motions and public bills.

Shall notice of motion No. 7 stand?

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I would like to dispense with your reading at length the preceding notices of motions. I think there is unanimous consent to proceed now to motion No. 20 and that all preceding notices of motions be allowed to stand and retain their precedence.

[English]

Mr. Herbert: Mr. Speaker, I suggest this would be an opportune time to put the first three items we are passing over as first call.

● (1700)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Shall notice of motion No. 7 stand at the request of the government?

Some hon. Members: Stand.

Mr. Herbert: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Shall notice of motion No. 9 stand at the request of the government?

Some hon. Members: Stand.

Mr. Herbert: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Shall notice of motion No. 19 stand at the request of the government?

Some hon. Members: Stand.

Mr. Herbert: No.

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SUPPLEMENTARY RETIREMENT BENEFITS ACT

ADVISABILITY OF AMENDMENT RESPECTING EXTENSION OF SERVICE

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation to amend the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act so that former Canadian armed forces personnel who must accept a release date calculated by the department and who find they are one, two or three days short of a completed full year of service, and therefore ineligible for benefits under the SRBA for that year and also do not benefit from compounding of the indexing factor for subsequent years, could complete the year in question by being credited one extra day for every leap-year of service.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a matter which has at one time or another been before all members of parliament who have

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Canadian armed forces bases in their ridings and who have a number of retired servicemen living in their constituencies.

When a member of the Canadian armed forces nears retirement, particularly when he is in his last year of service, he gives some thought to the date of his release. Frequently that date of release is calculated by the member in question in consultation with departmental officials on the basis of his having completed a full number of years; for instance, 25, 26, 27 and so on. However, there is a situation that occurs more often than is necessary. When a member of the Canadian armed forces retires and commences drawing his retirement allowance, both his pension and his entitlement with respect to indexing, if that is applicable, he can find that whereas he thought he had served 27 years, he has served only 26 years and 364 days. In other words, he is one day short of 27 years. I have eight or ten examples but there are two examples I wish to put on the record. By the department's own admission there are "numerous" incidents of this nature.

In the calculation of a member's entitlement, there is some conflict as to whether the Julian calendar count is the appropriate method. Where it is used, the actual number of days served is calculated. In the case of its being an unacceptable method of calculation, the years are counted as they appear normally, disregarding additional days picked up during leap years. There are not a lot of these situations but there are some. The cost of rectifying this situation would be negligible, but in terms of the moral injustice we do to members of the Canadian armed forces by causing them the loss of one full year because they have missed one day, the cost is great.

This injustice is difficult to understand, particularly when it is in the competence of this House to correct. What I suggest is a way to restore the benefit of a full year's service to these servicemen when they have 364, 363 or 362 days' service. One might even include service of 361 days, assuming that most members of the Canadian armed forces to whom this would be important served more than 24 years. Indeed, all cases that have come to my attention are matters in excess of 25 years.

In each case the individual has given me permission to cite his case. First is the case of R. C. Howell. He is a constituent of mine and lives in the city of Dartmouth. He retired from the Canadian armed forces in 1966, if my memory serves me correctly. To determine when he would retire, I quote from his certificate of service in the Royal Canadian Navy. This is form C.N.S. 1243. Mr. Howell's service is quite clear. He is a veteran. It shows the heading: "All engagements, including N.C.S., to be noted in these columns". The various columns read: "Date of actually volunteering; Commencement of time; Period volunteered for". Then I come to a column headed "Commencement of time" relating to his last year's service. It reads "6 May 1965"; under the heading "period volunteered for" it says "one year". In other words, to and including 6 May 1966. After having considered very carefully where he stood, and believing he had 27 years of service, Mr. Howell was advised on that date that he only had 26 years and 364 days.