

daughter of a deserter be not entitled to vote?

Mr. BUREAU: Not a deserter, but a man who has not been honourably discharged.

Mr. NICKLE: Not honourably discharged. Let us read the section:

Every female person shall be capable of voting and qualified to vote at a Dominion election in any province or in the Yukon Territory, who, being a British subject and qualified as to age, race and residence as required in the case of a male person in such province or in the Yukon Territory, as the case may be, is the wife, widow, mother, sister or daughter of any person, * * * * but excluding the wife, widow, mother, sister or daughter of any persons who have deserted from or have been otherwise than honourably discharged from any of such forces.

That can only refer to a member of the forces because the wife, mother, sister, or daughter cannot be discharged from the forces. The only person that can be discharged is a member of the forces, and therefore the reference excluding the relatives of a person means relatives of a soldier who has not been honourably discharged from the forces. I do not see any other meaning that can be taken out of the amendment.

Mr. BUREAU: It may be that my knowledge of the English language is defective, but when I translated this provision into French I found that it led to ambiguity. If you adopt my amendment there is no possibility of ambiguity. We will use the French version of the statute in our province. I do not see any harm in making this change. If it makes it more lucid I do not see why you should refuse to adopt it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We will return to that in a few minutes.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I think the view which my hon. friend has in mind would be achieved if we put at the end of the clause "excluding the relatives of persons who have deserted."

Mr. MEIGHEN: The difficulty would be that the relatives of persons who had deserted might have other persons at the front who had not deserted. What we are doing is to exclude deserters from the operation of the section altogether.

Mr. BUREAU: A woman might have one relative who had deserted and another who had not. That would be a hard case, but you cannot make a law that would meet every case.

Mr. MEIGHEN: You can meet that case.

Mr. BUREAU: My hon. friend wants to exclude a deserter and in that I am with him, but I say that the place to exclude a deserter is in the Military Voters' Act.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We are not on that Act.

Mr. BUREAU: You are giving the franchise to women in a clause that relates to women only. Under that clause the widow, wife, sister, or mother of the Canadian who has gone overseas to fight will have the right to vote. I am not opposed to disfranchising the deserter, but let that stand aside for the time being, because you will have to amend the rest of the law if you are going to do that. This particular suggestion I made came to my mind because the case of this man Monette, I happen to know something about the relatives of this man, and I asked myself: Why should these women, who, I am sorry to say, are not deserving of having the vote, even if Monette did go to the front, be given the right of the ballot while the wife of my neighbour, who has been working night and day knitting socks and collecting subscriptions for the Red Cross and the Patriotic Fund should be denied that right? If the theory of the Solicitor General is right, that we should emphasize the right of the man who has gone to the front to express himself at the polls, and I think it is, it must be remembered that this Bill does not deal with the right of any soldier to vote. It says that the female relatives of any person who has gone to the front shall have the right to vote. My hon. friend says that a deserter, or an officer who had not been properly discharged, would be excluded. But they should be dealt with in the Military Voters' Act. Let us put another section into this Act so that there will be absolutely no ambiguity as to the right of women who are the relatives of soldiers to vote.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We can return to the section in a moment. In the meantime I wish to move the amendment that I promised the hon. junior member for Halifax (Mr. A. K. Maclean) and the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell). I move that paragraph (d) of section 1 be amended by adding thereto the following as subsection 2 of 33A:

Such naval forces of Canada shall be deemed not to include members thereof engaged within Canada who may become members after the passing of this Act.

Amendment agree to.