

Canadian Forces Act

various matters affecting defence legislation, it might be done by way of amendments to the specific acts themselves, rather than by these omnibus Canadian forces acts.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, I should like to add my protest to those of the hon. members for Esquimalt-Saanich and Winnipeg North Centre. I think this is a most unsatisfactory way in which to deal with amendments to a number of acts. Even here in committee, with deference, Mr. Chairman, we pass from one act to another, without even a pause.

If we must be compelled to have a bill of this nature placed before us, then at least when we pass from part I to part II or from part III to part IV there should be a chance for us at least to turn up the other act to which we have to make reference, and also a chance for the minister to make a statement with regard to the change he is proposing.

I think this is a disorderly way of conducting business, when we have placed before us an omnibus amending bill of this nature. Having said that, I wonder if the Associate Minister of National Defence would make a statement with regard to part IV.

Mr. Campney: This amendment was introduced owing to the fact that the section dealing with military service, as affecting members of parliament, dealt only with the army and attendance at regularly organized militia camps. It was antiquated, because its application was only to the army. The purport of this particular clause is to make the same provision for the three services—the army, the navy and the air force. Secondly, the intention is to make the clause apply to any training authorized by regulation or made under the National Defence Act.

In other words, it is an attempt to cover all the services, and to modernize the terminology as to when a member of parliament may take his place in any of the services without being penalized under the Senate and House of Commons Act.

Mr. Churchill: I thank the associate minister for his statement. This constitutes an orderly approach to part IV, and has given us time to catch our breath. I notice the associate minister said that the clause is now applicable to the three services. Then he said, I believe, that it modernizes the wording as to procedure. In my opinion however this modernization is done in such a way that it makes it very convenient for a reserve officer who happens to be a member of the House of Commons to undertake service duties that might not be of great importance and yet, by virtue possibly of

some minor duty, the member would find himself not obliged to report his absence from the house.

The non-modern version which the minister is replacing reads as follows:

In the calculation of any deduction from any member's sessional allowance on account of absence, days which were spent by such member on duty with his corps in a regularly organized militia camp or in travelling between Ottawa and such camp shall not be computed.

When we look at the proposed new section we see that it reads in this way:

In the calculation of any deduction from any member's sessional allowance on account of absence, days that were spent by such member on service as an officer or man of the reserve forces while on any training or other duty authorized by regulations or orders made under the National Defence Act shall not be computed.

I think there is a very great difference in these. Other hon. members who are with the reserve forces may have a different opinion from mine, but as a member of the reserve army I think this is giving an unusual privilege to a member of the House of Commons. I can quite understand attending a camp or organized specific training for a period of ten days or three weeks, where one's absence might be essential, for the sake of the unit to which he was attached.

However, as I read this clause it seems to open the door for claiming service for rather minor bits of duty. The expression is—

—on service as an officer or man of the reserve forces while on any training or other duty authorized by regulations or orders made under the National Defence Act—

And so on. I submit to the associate minister this problem: If I, as commanding officer of No. 108 manning depot in the city of Winnipeg, found that it was necessary for the unit to have a parade on Monday night of each week, would it be satisfactory if I left here on Friday night, attended the parade on Monday and then made my way back to Ottawa, arriving here on Wednesday?

Mr. Knowles: Or Thursday, the day the Toronto boys are leaving.

Mr. Churchill: It would make a short week of attendance in the House of Commons, and I would have to give a move of that kind very serious consideration.

I put this further problem to the associate minister: let us suppose that, according to regulations concerning training authorized by the department, as an officer in a reserve unit I might find it convenient to attend a course here in Ottawa, or to become attached to some course to which I had not been posted, or if for purposes of training I visited some other unit in the neighbourhood, or in