

*Defence Services Pensions*

Defence to such a committee. If that committee can appropriately deal with this limited in clause 12 of the bill, would place on the same footing officer pensioners under parts I to IV or part V who, subsequent to retirement, accept employment in the public service of Canada.

I have attempted to indicate very briefly to the house the major points involved in the proposed amendments. Any further explanation which hon. members require will be given when this bill is discussed in committee. It is proposed that the bill would be referred to the committee to be set up to deal with the national defence bill, and the prize money bill which will be introduced following the resolution.

I should like to give some illustrations of the pay and pension of married men with 35 years service to indicate to hon. members the pensions that are payable under the existing provisions. These are as follows:

	Pay	Pension
Sergeant .....	\$2,532.00	\$1,772.40
Warrant officer, class 1		
Tradesman class group 4...	3,468.00	2,427.60
Major .....	5,232.00	3,662.40

I believe that those provisions will be found to be more liberal than those in force in the armed forces of any other country. The main purpose of these amendments is to make still more liberal, not in the rates of payment but in the provisions under which men may qualify. The bill also aims to bring about a more efficient and simplified working of the act.

The act as amended in 1946 has been in operation for some four years and the anomalies to which I have referred and the improvements which are thought to be necessary have come to light during that time. Our hope is that it will be possible to enact before too long a much more simplified pension act along the lines of the provisions existing in part V and providing for the residual group in parts I to IV in much more simple terms. Until we have taken this interim step that would be a difficult thing to bring about because of the different categories of officers and men affected.

If the house adopts the proposals that are now made it will enable us, say within a period of a year or two, to reintroduce a completely new Defence Services Pension Act providing substantially the same provisions but making the administration and application much more simple. I regard this interim step as essential in order to extend to some men who have been excluded by cut-off dates from some of the conditions that they would like to have under part V. For

all these reasons I commend the bill to the favourable consideration of the house.

**Mr. G. R. Pearkes (Nanaimo):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to the change in the title of the act, which obviously is desirable, it is also necessary that service personnel pensions should be revised. Changing conditions of the service have made such a review necessary and therefore we shall agree to the amendments which are being recommended in this bill.

Changing conditions of service have placed the emphasis upon youth. The services today are young. As these young men are serving in peacetime they must be given the opportunity to gain experience in command so that they would be able to meet the requirements of service should war break out in the future. In order to enable them to gain that experience in command, there must be retirement at the top so that there can be a general movement up through the various ranks of the forces.

The retirement of a great many of the permanent force personnel will be necessary before they have completed the full term in order to draw their maximum pension. That presents complications because you cannot have a lot of young men retiring and being able to draw substantial pensions for many years to come without placing a heavy drain on the treasury, nor can you turn these young men loose without giving them adequate means to maintain themselves. One has to have in mind the increased cost of living. Therefore it is not easy to find the medium by which pensions should be paid. I note that in the bill emphasis is placed upon the fact that henceforth men who retire will receive their pensions as a matter of right instead of as an act of grace on decision of the minister. I am not sure that the policy of accepting the pension as a matter of right is carried all through the bill because there are obstacles placed in the way of the ex-serviceman, be he officer or other rank, in accepting a position in other branches of the government service than the armed forces. I cannot help feeling that it might be advisable to make some further modifications in the bill in order to permit greater facilities for ex-servicemen to take appointments in other branches of the government service.

There are a number of small details such as the cut-off date, to which the minister referred, which may need some discussion and adjustment in the committee. I am not quite certain that in all cases we have taken the correct cut-off date but those matters will be better discussed in the committee than at this stage. I do not intend to take up any more time of the house. I merely wish to say that when the bill is sent to the