

Veterans Insurance Act

that this is not a contentious matter and that it is one which, I am sure, can be dealt with more expeditiously and more adequately by the committee. I presume it is the minister's intention, after the discussion has been completed here, to refer this matter to the committee on veterans affairs on which we have some members, and with this brief statement I am prepared to content myself.

Mr. Herridge: I just arrived in time to have the delightful experience of finding the minister out of order for the first time in this house.

Mr. Brooks: Not seriously, I hope.

Mr. Herridge: Not seriously, but I enjoy these experiences.

I listened with interest to his explanation of the two, as I understand it, major amendments that will be to the advantage of the veterans. I understand that in the past some representations along these lines have been made. I am glad to see the minister introducing these two amendments.

As I understand it, the remainder of the amendments are purely to improve the administration of the act. Like the former speaker, I think this matter could be readily referred to the standing committee on veterans affairs, with little debate at this stage, where we shall have an opportunity to go into the details to much better advantage than in these circumstances.

Mr. Brooks: I thank the hon. member for Laurier and the hon. member for Kootenay West for their consideration. It was our intention to ask that the bill be sent to the veterans affairs committee of which committee the hon. member for Kootenay West is a splendid member, where I am sure it will receive very careful attention.

Resolution reported and concurred in.

Mr. Brooks thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-33, to amend the Returned Soldiers' Insurance Act.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the bill be read the second time?

Mr. Brooks: May I ask the unanimous consent of the house to have it read the second time now? I would like very much to see the bill go before the committee as soon as possible. The committee is set up.

Mr. Chevrier: By leave.

Mr. Speaker: The house has agreed to permit this bill to be read the second time now by unanimous consent.

Hon. A. J. Brooks (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, by leave, the second reading of Bill No. C-33, to amend the Returned Soldiers' Insurance Act.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the standing committee on veterans affairs.

VETERANS INSURANCE ACT

AMENDMENTS TO INCREASE AMOUNT PAID TO BENEFICIARY AS ANNUITY, REMOVE RESTRICTIONS, ETC.

Hon. A. J. Brooks (Minister of Veterans Affairs) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Veterans Insurance Act so as to increase the amount of insurance that may be paid to a beneficiary as an annuity in certain cases; to remove restrictions in payment of insurance in the case of pensioners and to extend the time limit for applications for insurance.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Sevigny in the chair.

Mr. Chevrier: Will the minister make a statement.

Mr. Brooks: Mr. Chairman, the amendments that we are asking for to the Veterans Insurance Act are quite similar to those that we are asking for in the Returned Soldiers' Insurance Act. As a matter of fact, the Returned Soldiers' Insurance Act was an insurance act which granted insurance to veterans of the first world war. The Veterans Insurance Act is the insurance act which provided insurance for veterans of the second world war, for Korean veterans and others. As I stated in connection with the returned soldiers insurance bill, I am sure that hon. members will wish an explanation in general terms of the provisions of this bill.

The Veterans Insurance Act for veterans of world war II and their widows was passed in 1944. The first policies were issued on April 1, 1945. Initially, the period of eligibility to contract for this insurance was three years. It was subsequently extended to six years and eventually to December 31, 1954, or 10 years after discharge, whichever is the later. As with returned soldiers insurance, medical requirements are slight, thus enabling life insurance to be obtained which might not be available commercially except perhaps at a greatly increased rate of premium. Many persons with disabilities took advantage of this opportunity and, as before, many in good health also applied for and