

Newfoundland

Mr. MacNicol: I want to ask two questions on this section. First, what will be the position of the South African war veteran in Newfoundland after confederation? Will it be the same as that of the South African veteran in Canada? Second, what about the widows of deceased non-pensioned soldiers? Will their position be the same in Newfoundland as in Canada?

Mr. Gregg: The situation in regard to the war veterans allowance and pensions as they affect South African veterans will be exactly the same in Newfoundland as in the rest of Canada.

Section agreed to.

On section 39—*Public servants.*

Mr. Church: According to this section the employees of the government of Newfoundland in the services taken over by Canada under this agreement will be offered employment in these or similar Canadian services, and they are to have all pension rights, and so on, to which otherwise they would be entitled. If these officials are to be appointed in the same ratio to population as the six persons who are to be called to another place, sometimes known as the place of the saints' everlasting rest, I am afraid they will reach four deep from here to Lansdowne park, judging by the way we have been increasing officials.

Section agreed to.

On section 40—*Welfare and other public services.*

Mr. Knowles: This is an omnibus section, which covers a number of matters, and to begin with I should like to ask one or two questions in reference to old age pensions. I am sorry the Minister of National Health and Welfare is not in his seat, but I see his parliamentary assistant is here. One situation obtains in connection with old age pensions which is somewhat analogous to the problem that has just been discussed with respect to the war veterans allowance. I refer to the residence qualifications. If I understand the terms aright, once Newfoundland becomes part of Canada it will mean—and I would say rightly so—that a person who has lived in Newfoundland for the required qualifying period, which is twenty years as defined in the regulations, will qualify for the old age pension. This means that before long we are going to have this situation. We will have people who have lived in Newfoundland for a period of eighteen years, during which time Newfoundland was not part of Canada, qualifying after two years' residence in Canada for the old age pension. On the

other hand we have people who have lived in the United Kingdom for ten or fifteen or eighteen years of the qualifying period coming to Canada for the last two or three years before reaching the age of seventy, and they will not qualify.

Mr. Gibson (Comox-Alberni): Why not?

Mr. Knowles: The hon. member for Comox-Alberni asks why not. That is the way the law reads, the law brought in by the government my hon. friend usually supports. If by his question my hon. friend is deploring this fact, I quite agree with him. I want to make clear what I said a moment ago, that I feel it is perfectly right that this provision should apply in the case of people in Newfoundland. But it does seem to me to highlight, as did the veterans problem, the need for a reciprocal arrangement in matters of social security and old age pensions in particular. I wonder if consideration has been given or will be given, as a result of this situation, to a reciprocal arrangement at least between this country and the United Kingdom, and I think we should go further and have such arrangements between Canada and all the other countries of the commonwealth.

Mr. Reid: As the hon. member will readily understand, I am not in a position to say whether or not the matter has been given consideration. All I can do is to assure him that the matter laid before the committee a moment ago will be brought to the attention of the minister.

Mr. MacInnis: I am not sure whether or not there is an old age pension scheme in effect in Newfoundland at the present time; or if there is, I do not know what the amount of the pension is. If there is not, the people of Newfoundland cannot, I assume, take advantage of the dominion government's contribution to old age pensions until an old age pensions act is passed by the provincial government that will take office. Will this government wait until that time or will it pay its share of the contribution to old age pensioners who qualify in Newfoundland after March 31, 1949, pending the time the legislature puts an old age pensions act into effect? That would mean, of course, that under present conditions persons in Newfoundland over the age of seventy, and qualifying for the old age pension, would receive a pension of \$22.50 a month. Has that phase of the question been discussed?

I have in mind that it will take a considerable time for the provincial government to be elected and to get its affairs in order. In the meantime there are old people who

[Mr. Pearkes.]