

Newfoundland

expect me to cover fully points 2 and 3. Point 2 was made by both of them. They are larger questions, and I shall be glad to discuss them at some later date. I should like to say with regard to point 2, however, that there are a number of old veterans in Canada who cannot be quite properly defined as imperials, and who served in either the commonwealth forces or the allied forces. The third point made by the hon. member for Nanaimo was not made by those who discussed very thoroughly how the war veterans allowance would be reflected amongst the older veterans of Newfoundland, but I assure him we will keep that in mind as we enter upon the administrative stage after the first of April.

On the first point made by the hon. member for Nanaimo, as we stand now in Canada, a man domiciled in Canada before he enlisted in the first world war is eligible to apply for veterans allowance regardless of whether he served in the commonwealth forces or in the allied forces. Therefore, when this agreement is signed, those Newfoundland veterans of world war I who served on behalf of Canada, as it will be then, wherever it may have been, and who had pre-war domicile in Canada, as it will be then, will be eligible to apply for war veterans allowance.

Mr. Pearkes: I am very pleased to hear the minister say that those men who were domiciled in Canada, and who served in the imperial forces, will now be eligible for war veterans allowance. I know they have been allowed to apply for war veterans allowance, but they have not in all cases received it. I have referred individual cases to the minister and to his department, and the answer has always been that these men were not domiciled immediately before their enlistment. I can tell the names of men who were living in Canada prior to the outbreak of world war I, had been living here for a number of years, and for some reason had left Canada and gone to the United Kingdom. Sometimes it was for educational purposes, and in some cases to adjust private matters. In other cases they had gone to the United States. Because they had left Canada for a period of twelve months prior to the outbreak of war, although they had been domiciled in Canada for four, five or more years, they have been refused the war veterans allowance. If a man was domiciled in Canada immediately before he enlisted in the imperial forces I know he is eligible for the allowance, but those who were not domiciled here immediately prior to the outbreak of war have had their applications refused. I am pleased to note, however, that the minister has now said that they will be eligible.

Mr. Gregg: I should like to comment briefly. There has been no change. The present act,

[Mr. Gregg.]

and the interpretation of it, makes eligible those men who were domiciled in Canada immediately before the outbreak of war.

Mr. Pearkes: Immediately, yes.

Mr. Gregg: That has been the interpretation, and until any change is made that will apply to those in Newfoundland.

Mr. Mutch: There is one question with respect to immediate domicile. The war veterans allowance board has consistently ruled that those people are eligible who, having been domiciled in Canada, left Canada for purposes of education. I think I can quite safely challenge anyone to find an authentic case of a man being declared ineligible if he left Canada for educational purposes, even if he was in the middle of two years at Oxford, or something of that sort. If he came originally from England, and his parents came with him and established domicile here, the board has consistently held that his domicile was here. In such a case he would be treated as though he had enlisted from an immediate domicile even though he joined the forces while he was at Oxford, let us say. If I understood the hon. member for Nanaimo a few moments ago when he was talking about this matter, he kept repeating the fact that Canadians, who left Canada and went to the United States or some other place, and who subsequently joined the British navy or some other force, have not been eligible in the past under the War Veterans Allowance Act. If that is what he did say, then the hon. gentleman will realize, of course, that he is in error, because there is no question of domicile for a Canadian. It follows that when a Newfoundlander becomes a Canadian, as he will do, the question of domicile does not exist. The question of domicile exists for those who came as immigrants to this country, who were here for a time and then returned home, joined the allied forces, and subsequently returned. As to the interpretation of the question whether or not they are domiciled, the period is not fixed except by practice. The whole entitlement hinges on the question of domicile, and the interpretation is in the hands of the board itself. It will be the same situation when we extend these benefits to our new Canadian cousins in the province of Newfoundland.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Veterans Affairs not confusing domicile with residence? It is very obvious that is what he is doing, because it is being interpreted that a man must have been living in Canada immediately prior. As far as domicile is concerned, it does not matter where he is living.