

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): If I understand the regulations rightly, these young men who were drafted for thirty days' training—now four months—were ordered to report to the nearest medical practitioner. Every registered medical practitioner was authorized, for a small fee, a dollar I believe, to examine these young men. What is the record in this regard? I have heard of some astonishing cases. I heard of a man who was examined by a local medical doctor and who was so blind that when he came to the training centre he had to be helped out of the orderly room. That is of course an isolated case. I would not suggest for a moment that there were many such cases. Perhaps the Minister of Fisheries heard of that one.

Mr. POWER: If that is so, it is a reflection upon the medical men of Canada.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): It slams somebody, whoever it may be. I understand there is some truth in the report. The second case was a man with a club foot who was brought into the military training centre.

Mr. POWER: Under the pension act he would not get a pension for so obvious a disability.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Is it suggested that the indiscriminate use of everybody in the medical profession in the examination of these trainees before they are brought in is a proper course to pursue? We ought to tighten up on it, and we cannot do it too soon. It costs something to transport these men to the training centre and send them home again.

Mr. POWER: The Minister of National War Services is not here, but I would ask the leader of the opposition this question: Would he choose doctors in any community, including his own?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am not under cross-examination. There are good doctors and poor doctors and those in between.

Mr. POWER: Would the hon. member like to choose them?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I would certainly set up a board in every case. It is the duty of the military authorities or of the department to set up a board to ascertain who is medically fit.

Mr. POWER: So far as the military medical authorities are concerned, we chose the Canadian Medical association; but as regards examining men who came as trainees, the department did not have time to choose as between one doctor and another in any given

[Mr. Power.]

community. I will wager that if my hon. friend had to choose doctors in Fredericton, if he were running a non-partisan government, he would be in a bit of a hole.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not think so. That only proves that the whole thing was an improvisation.

Mr. RALSTON: Oh, no. My hon. friend always gets to that stage before he is through. These doctors were chosen on the recommendation of the Canadian Medical association and it was thought that it would be convenient for a man to be examined in his own home town rather than to be transported miles and then sent back. I do not know of the case the hon. member has cited, but there were cases in which there was exceedingly slipshod work.

Mr. McCANN: What was the percentage?

Mr. RALSTON: I cannot give the percentage. There were cases in which they were caught when they came to the training centre because there was a doctor there who understood more clearly the military regulations with respect to the examination of men who were to engage in military training. There is nothing slipshod about it there. The doctors were selected under the department of the Minister of National War Services. The Department of National Defence did not take the men on and had no responsibility for them until they reached the training centre. When they reached the training centre they were examined by the doctors there. Their sheets were gone over and any that indicated the necessity for further looking into the condition of a man were immediately attended to. There were men who had been passed who obviously should not have been. I have sent a note to the director general of medical services to obtain the percentage. This examination was for the benefit of the recruit himself. The selections were made partly on the basis of medical opinion, and medical opinion evidently went wrong in the selection of some of these gentlemen.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): But there was no selection. Every registered medical practitioner was qualified and authorized to make examinations. No one was selected by the department, no one was designated—

Mr. POWER: Nobody was selected by the Department of National War Services, but when they came to the training camps the men were selected by the military medical men. Of those selected by the war services—I am guessing—I would say that about ten per cent were not fit for C1—that is, the man who could walk five miles with a pack on his back.