

*National Defence*

general. I suggest this should be considered carefully, as to whether we should not again have that provision inserted, that the armed forces be vested in the king, as usual, with administration through the governor general and the king's privy councillors in Canada. I think that would be far better than giving complete control to the Minister of National Defence.

I notice that right through the changes which have been made there has been a gradual inclination to change the control formerly vested in the king and council to the minister and the departmental heads. I do not know whether that change is good or not, but I feel that with the complete control in the king and parliament we are on safer ground than to delegate this authority to the paid administrators in our defence system.

Then, the Militia Act provided for an age limit of eighteen for anyone joining the services. In the new bill there is no age limit. I believe an age limit of eighteen years is fair enough and acts as a safeguard against youth under that age tying up their lives in the army and later regretting it. I feel that if the age of eighteen were re-inserted it would protect them. Of course, in a case of dire necessity or of war, or something of that kind, parliament could reconsider its decision. I feel however that the age limit of eighteen years should be re-inserted in the bill.

Then, section 34—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. May I ask the hon. member not to refer in such detail to the clauses of the bill. At the present time the house should consider the principle of the bill and not the clauses.

**Mr. Jones:** I am sorry I referred to the sections, but I had them noted that way. The new bill eliminates provision for the time of service required for training each year. I feel again that that is a provision which should be considered, because the principle there involved is that young men are called up annually to serve in the reserve forces, in the past for thirty days and now for an unlimited time. To place upon this period of service a limitation of thirty days or, if necessary, forty-five days and two or three weeks in camp as well as two or three weeks training at night, gives the employer of labour or of young men in those forces an opportunity to map out his program for the year with the knowledge as to how many weeks or days the young man he employs will be away from his place of business, or from the industry or farm where he works.

At the present time the employer has no means of knowing how long the young man he employs will be absent from his work. For the protection of the industrial owner,

[Mr. Jones.]

farmers and others, and also for the good of the department itself, I believe it would be best to come out flatly and say, "We need these young men for a certain period of days each year", and thus help to bring better feeling between industry and the department.

For many years regulations have been made in the army, both reserve and regular forces, to the effect that officers must wear certain dress on certain occasions. The rules are there; they are definite, and the officers have to follow them; but the unfortunate part of it to my mind is that these officers have to purchase the dress to which I have referred. While this was all right in the old days when people accepting commands in the army had plenty of money and could afford to pay, and when it was regarded as a privilege to buy their own clothes, today with our democratic army it is not fair to ask a young man who may be promoted from the ranks because of his ability to hold a commission to accept the penalty of having to buy his own clothes. It is not fair to say to him, "You must wear certain clothes, certain uniforms, and from your own pocket provide the wherewithal to purchase them." When dress is prescribed by this or any other act for wear by officers or men it should automatically be provided by the government. Otherwise I think it is unfair to have such a provision.

There should be considerable modification with regard to courts of inquiry, courts martial and so on. I have always felt that the sentences imposed were sometimes harsh and that the administration was often by inexperienced officers. I suggest that special schools be set up to train officers for work in these courts and before any man is entrusted with the trial of another man for a misdemeanour he should be properly trained, especially in the humanities, so that he can approach the problem with a sensible point of view.

I have known of officers who were not capable of sitting in judgment on their fellow men because they had not that happy faculty of seeing both sides of a situation. Where a charge is serious a man should have access to proper legal assistance, as was the case under the old act. The rights of soldiers should be properly protected. Many fine men were ruined in both wars by the imposition of unjust punishment. Resentment boiled up with the result that they made poor soldiers. In order to have a good soldier you must have an understanding commanding officer and an understanding officer in