

(Translation): Mr. Speaker, I have placed the following motion on the order paper:

In the opinion of this House, the Department of Public Works should, without delay, study and make plans for the deepening or cleaning of the Mille-Iles river, at five or six points and for limited distances and widths, between St. Eustache-sur-le-Lac and Ste. Rose, Rosemere, Pont-David.

All the hon. members of the Montreal district, and especially the hon. representative for Laval-Two Mountains (Mr. Lacombe), who spoke in favour of this project, the day before yesterday, know the picturesqueness of this river and are cognizant of the fact that thousands of Montreal families spend the summer there. Yachting is very popular on this watercourse; however, it is navigable on a stretch of 14 miles only, between Pont-David and St. Eustache-sur-le Lac. Between these two towns, the channel, although narrow in places, is deep enough to accommodate even the largest yachts. In about four or five places, limited dredging and cleaning operations should be carried out. But what is unfortunate is that the yachts sailing this part of the river cannot reach Two Mountains Lake and vice versa. At St. Eustache-sur-le-Lac, there are rapids only a few hundred feet long, which may be sailed at high water only.

The first job to be done would be to improve these rapids. The removal, in the winter time, of some large boulders, which are to be found there and the marking of the channel, however narrow it may be, would be sufficient to allow yachts cruising on lakes St. Louis and Two Mountains to go down Mille-Iles river as far as Pont-David and back again. The removal of the boulders would not affect in any way the water level on Two Mountains lake but would further develop the tourist trade in the immediate surroundings of Montreal.

The membership of the Thousand Islands Yachting Club runs into the hundreds. The club is planning to build special wharves, repair shops for yachts, service stations, etc. The development which would immediately follow in the wake of such undertakings, involving but little outlay of time and money, is readily apparent. First, a first-rate tourist industry; for workers of the locality and vicinity, hardest hit by the shutdown of war plants, a plentiful source of jobs: building hundreds of homes on the islands and on shore, putting up wharves, laying out gardens, lawns, etc. For the farmer, a new market for his produce.

I commend this project to the minister. I know of his devotion to any cause likely to add to the country's might and standing. I

know that he will not balk at revamping his plans and at having his department look into this plan to which the hon. members for Montreal and vicinity cannot remain indifferent.

The announcement, confirmed by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Abbott) that all Canadian servicemen now overseas, numbering about 14,000, will return "sometime before the end of the year" has been well received. I think they should have been brought back earlier. Then, too, Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps time that leniency be asked for the thousand odd deserters remaining in the country. Speaking in this house, early in the session, I suggested that a court be set up, in each military district, for reviewing cases of desertion on their merits.

All desertion cases are not caused by ill will or fear of danger. In many instances, they are based on excellent reasons which the parties concerned, while serving in the army, could not adequately explain, through timidity or for other motives. Other soldiers deserted because their application for farm or compassionate leave came up against the uncompromising attitude of certain senior officers who were die-hard fanatics; others because they were not given proper medical attention when they needed it; others still because their commanding officers refused to understand and to help them, or because the rebuff was tinged with an arrogance which hurt their pride. This is why it seems to me all these cases require special consideration and study. Circumstances must be taken into account. There have been deserters in my district; many rejoined their unit last summer and since then. Their cases have been straightened out. The same happened throughout the country. Detention camps, through the bad name they have acquired, prevented a large number of young men to abide by the law. This problem of deserters should be settled once and for all. More indulgence and consideration should be shown at this time to those who are held in detention or have rejoined their unit.

One hears of a permanent army. The international situation and our geographical position on the American continent might oblige us to maintain one. The military-minded could find a career in the permanent army which could only be organized on a voluntary basis. Compulsion, so hateful in war time, would become simply obnoxious in time of peace.

I have already stated in this house and I repeat that the government should sell or even hand over to private industry the war plants