

Mr. RALSTON: She has had to leave her husband?

Mr. PERLEY: Yes. The two sons overseas are quite willing to make contributions to the mother from their pay. She thinks some allowance should be made by the department, by way of separation allowance. Could the minister inform the committee if he has heard of other cases similar to this one, and if there is any way whereby a woman in that position could receive some consideration, particularly when her sons overseas are willing to contribute a portion of their pay? I have in mind two or three cases which could be described as desperate, and which, I believe, should have some consideration.

Mr. RALSTON: From what the hon. member says I understand the husband is not a soldier.

Mr. PERLEY: No. I regret to say he is a returned soldier of the last war, but he now refuses to maintain the wife.

Mr. RALSTON: The investigation would be made to ascertain whether dependency could be established as between the mother and the sons; that is, if she is partly dependent upon the sons for support.

Mr. PERLEY: She was.

Mr. RALSTON: It sounds rather discouraging, from that point of view.

Mr. PERLEY: She was dependent upon them to a certain extent, before they enlisted.

Mr. RALSTON: And they are making assignments of pay?

Mr. PERLEY: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: And she wishes to see whether dependents' allowance can be paid in respect of them?

Mr. PERLEY: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: The matter would be investigated from the point of view of dependency. The dependents' allowance board takes the position that in such cases they do not interfere in respect of rights between a wife and a husband. But the way my hon. friend puts it, it might be contended that she was deserting her husband. She voluntarily elects to leave him, and has elected to cut herself off from the support he would give her, provided they lived together. Is that correct?

Mr. PERLEY: Yes; that is correct. He has refused to give support, and there are two other small children to be fed and clothed.

[Mr. Perley.]

Mr. RALSTON: But she does not have to leave them.

Mr. PERLEY: The conditions have been such that she has had to.

Mr. RALSTON: It sounds to me as though she could take legal action for separation.

Mr. PERLEY: It has not gone that far.

Mr. RALSTON: I am referring to legal action for separation, in view of the fact that she has not condoned his refusal to support her. I do not think the wife can simply pull out, and say, "I am not going to stay here any longer," if he provides her with a home.

Mr. GRAYDON: It would depend upon the provocation.

Mr. PERLEY: The boys are willing to assign part of their pay.

Mr. RALSTON: The hon. member asked me if we have had any similar cases. My deputy tells me that he has not heard of a case of that kind. He was advising me on general principles, namely, that dependency has to be shown. If the hon. member has the case in mind, he might give me the name, and I could look into it.

Mr. GILLIS: I wish to say something about travel, transportation and freight, but I shall not go into any specific cases. I am just a little bit disappointed with the functioning of parliament, as I have seen it since coming here. We talk about everything, except the matter before the Chair. If every hon. member took the position he was going to bring his files for the last four years down to the chamber, so that he might discuss individual cases, and then, after occupying a couple of hours of time, tucked his files under his arm and went away for two or three weeks—because that happens, there is no doubt about it—we would find ourselves in a peculiar position.

An hon. MEMBER: I hope he does.

Mr. MacNICOL: He does not go away that long.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): Do not be too optimistic.

Mr. GILLIS: I am both disappointed and disgusted.

Mr. MacNICOL: Here he is now.

Mr. GILLIS: If he has a quarrel with the Minister of National Defence or anyone in the minister's department, it should be a personal matter.

I bring to the minister's attention the matter of transportation as applied to different