

is not being made through the special products board, as sales are supposed to be made; that the dealers or shippers of New Brunswick were not notified of the sale, that they were not given their fair share of the business, but that, in some way which should be explained, one dealer or perhaps more who possibly had some pull with the government was given the business. The special products board, I am informed, in reply to inquiries which were made a day or two ago, refused to give the quantities of potatoes that were being shipped or the names of the shippers. The board stated that it was done under a private agreement—whatever “a private agreement” may mean. The transaction, I believe, is contrary to the regulations; it is not playing fair with the shippers and dealers; it has the ear-marks of somebody having some particular pull; and it seems to me that light should be thrown on the transaction.

I ask the minister these questions: Have seed potatoes been sold to Spain? If so, how many were sold and at what price; what shipper or dealer supplied the potatoes, and if there was more than one, who were they and how much did each supply? What was the date of the contract and what were its terms? Has an export permit been issued by the Department of Trade and Commerce; and if so, for what quantities was it issued, and when? Was the sale made through the special products board? If it was not made through that board, how was it made, and when? Why were not all the shippers or dealers in New Brunswick permitted to share in the business?

These are questions which, I think, should be answered. It is difficult to understand, if this sale has gone through, why it did not go through in the regular way and why all the shippers or dealers in New Brunswick did not get their fair share of the business.

Mr. McCANN: I must admit that I am not in a position to answer the question, and there is no use in bluffing about it. I am only handling these supplementary estimates for the Minister of Trade and Commerce in his unavoidable absence from the house; but I think I can assure the hon. gentleman that the questions as indicated on *Hansard* will receive the personal attention both of the minister and his staff and that the answers will be sent to the hon. member for St. John-Albert.

Mr. HAZEN: I thank the minister very much. I shall appreciate it if the minister will do that.

Item agreed to.

[Mr. Hazen.]

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Normal services—

181. Grants to military associations and institutes, as detailed in the estimates, \$10,425.

Mr. PROBE: I want to make a very short plea at this stage on behalf of the Canadian men and women in the army of occupation. I have had quite a number of letters, as no doubt all hon. members have, concerning conditions in Europe. I have summarized them briefly, and I should like to have the Minister of National Defence make some statement with respect to them. The most common allegation at the moment is with respect to the inadequacy and bad quality of food received by other ranks in the army of occupation. I was over there at a time when the black market situation was not too good, in France particularly, and United States and Canadian boys were penalized because advantage was taken of the quartermaster. It seems to me that if the men are suffering as a result of this, the Minister of National Defence may have means of investigating it.

The second important criticism which is commonly received is a protest about the lack of educational and vocational training for the occupation troops. I know that an elaborate scheme was set up to provide that material over there, and I wonder whether it has fallen down, whether the staffs have left the continent and the boys are limited to their own initiative.

The third matter is with respect to lack of proper recreational facilities. I have here a number of clippings from the *Overseas Maple Leaf* as late as the 28th and 29th of November complaining about that. I will not read them, but I should like to know what facilities are available.

Of course there is also the perennial complaint, arising from considerable resentment, that former combat men, some of whom were wounded in action, are placed in the army of occupation while N.R.M.A. men have been returned to Canada. Might we have a brief statement from the minister explaining how he is safeguarding the morale of the army of occupation?

Mr. ABBOTT: First, on the question of food: as I said a little while ago, the rations which our men are receiving are exactly the same as the rations issued to the British troops. We have always supplied our troops with the same ration, but we are supplementing it to some extent with fruit juices. The basic ration however is the same as that received by the British army of occupation.

Mr. PROBE: And they are getting it?