

In the case of the veteran to whom the hon. member referred the other day, a report has been furnished, and it appears that the reasons for refusal were not quite as my hon. friend understands them to be. This veteran, who was about fifty years of age, proposed to make his living from an orchard, and the production of small fruits from one and a half acres of quite good land, equipped with a small three-roomed frame house. The applicant was found to have had little or no association with agriculture for the past twenty-four years. He is employed, as I understand, as a metal polisher in Toronto. The officers of the department, and the advisory board, seriously questioned this man's prospects of success in an occupation for which he lacked training and experience.

However, I may assure my hon. friend that one refusal is not final. The officers of the board are trying to find a type of reestablishment which will fit more closely with this man's present employment, and offer him greater prospects of success.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: I understood the minister to say that a committee of local farmers and business men, and I presume legionnaires and ex-veterans, sit as a committee in respect of small holdings. If that is so, why is it not done in the Fraser Valley? I understood the minister to say, further, that he presumed a veteran would have a reasonable chance of making a partial living, or of gaining partial employment in some other line of farming. In my riding this is what has happened, particularly in the vicinity of Chilliwack. I should like to know if local people who know conditions will be consulted before these men are settled.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Definitely, yes. I understand that in the case referred to the advisory committee consisted of only two gentlemen. They were estimable gentlemen but they were not necessarily in touch with all the local conditions. There is no objection whatever to enlarging these local committees and giving representation to the Canadian Legion and local councils or to practical farmers. We want the advice of those who know local conditions and we are only too glad to have it.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Will such a committee be consulted before any settlement is made?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Certainly

Mr. FAIR: I invited the Minister of Mines and Resources and the Minister of Finance to put up an argument to-night, but they have walked out without doing so. I had hoped

that before going to the home for the aged the Minister of Mines and Resources would have cleared his conscience of at least some of the sins he has committed against these old soldier settlers. I do not want those sins to haunt him in the happier days that lie ahead.

Mr. GILLIS: When the national defence estimates were being considered I endeavoured to get a clarification of the status of the members of the voluntary nursing aid detachment serving with the Canadian Army, particularly in connection with gratuities. I did not get an answer and I was wondering if the Minister of Veterans' Affairs is in a position to give some information. Doubt was expressed before as to whether the members of the St. John ambulance corps were members of the army. I have in my hand several orders in council that definitely tie them in with the Canadian Army in connection with rations, discipline, orders and everything else.

There is an appendix to general order 156 of 1942. This is quite lengthy and all through it we find that these girls are definitely under the regulations pertaining to the army medical corps. During the last few weeks these girls were ordered to take off the service ribbons they had been wearing for the past fifteen months. Evidently since this discussion as to their eligibility for gratuity came up in the house there has been some action behind the scene to relegate them to a category where they will not be entitled to gratuities.

I am not going to read these orders and no doubt the minister can check them with the Department of National Defence. I think an injustice is being done to this particular service. They are prohibited from marrying; they get the same leave as officers; they get the same transportation rights and are under the same discipline as the nursing sisters. Has the minister any information?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I am afraid I have not. My hon. friend was kind enough to approach me personally with reference to these cases, and several other people have done the same thing in the last week or two. I do not know whether they have a definite form of enlistment for service for the duration of the war, but I think there is a lot of merit in the contention of my hon. friend. Without committing myself I shall certainly be most happy—it does not come under my jurisdiction—to look into the situation. Perhaps my hon. friend will be kind enough to send me copies of the documents he showed me this afternoon and then I shall be happy to bring them to the attention of my colleagues.