

Mr. RALSTON: I have the figures here, but at the moment they are not in the form in which my hon. friend wants them.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I should like to direct a suggestion to the minister in regard to article 102, subsection (g) of the regulations. I have always found the dependents' allowance board very fair in its administration, but of course it cannot go beyond the provisions of the law. This section provides that no allowance shall be paid or granted to the wife of a non-commissioned officer or man who subsequent to enlistment marries without obtaining the permission of his commanding officer. Having regard to the instances that have been brought to my attention I think this section is rather unfair in its general operation. I have in mind the case of a man who enlisted on June 22, 1940. At the time of his enlistment he said that he had been married on June 17, 1940. In Saskatchewan it is necessary to give notice of your intention to marry; then you must wait for a period fixed by statute before the marriage can take place. Apparently this man had given notice of intention on June 17 but did not get married until June 27, 1940. As soon as this fact was ascertained the wife's allowance was taken away, and she has not been in receipt of it since that time.

Mr. RALSTON: What was the date of the notice?

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I shall send the minister the file, in full detail. I am just pointing out the circumstances. I received a letter the other day, dated May 20, 1943, which stated that if permission to marry is granted the woman in question, dependents' allowance may be reinstated. But until such permission is granted, no allowance may be paid to her. I submit that after a lapse of almost three years some provision should be made for removal of the penalization of the woman for having married the soldier without his first having secured his commanding officer's consent. Considering the other side of the question, if this soldier had what is commonly known as a common law wife, under certain circumstances she would be entitled to the allowance.

Mr. RALSTON: He must have lived with a so-called common law wife for at least two years before enlistment. That is the difference.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: But, regardless of the period, there are circumstances under which a common law wife can receive an allowance. Here is a woman who is being penalized because of the infraction by her husband of military rules. This section could and should

be amended so as to make provision that after a reasonable time, say a matter of three or six months at the outside, an allowance could be granted. That would seem to be proper, if we must penalize soldiers for marrying without the permission of their commanding officers. I make this suggestion to the minister. In my opinion a change in this connection is very necessary to cover what must be a considerable number of cases coming within the purview of this regulation.

Mr. RALSTON: If the hon. member will send the particulars to me, I shall make a note of them as indicating a type rather than an individual case.

Mr. GILLIS: Is it possible for the minister to obtain those figures by military districts?

Mr. RALSTON: I have just had the figures prepared. The total applications and re-applications are 42,017. The completed applications number 33,734—and when I refer to completed applications I refer to those in connection with which evidence is completed and a decision reached. Uncompleted applications, those in connection with which further details are being obtained or decision has not yet been reached, number 8,143. I have not the total number of cases in which the allowances were granted, but the total amount of grants stands at \$694,214.63. Then, giving the hon. member some local information, I would point out that through the committee in Halifax city there have been 1,158 applications, 851 of which have been completed and 307 incomplete. The grants have amounted to about \$13,000. Those are single grants. In addition there have been some recurrent or regular monthly payments.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): Has the minister the figures for the other military districts?

Mr. RALSTON: If we have not the figures for the districts, we have them for each city or town in which a local committee is situated.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): The information by local committees would be satisfactory. What does the minister mean by a completed case? Is that a case in which an allowance has been granted?

Mr. RALSTON: No, not necessarily. It means an application which has been dealt with—that is, a grant has been made or refused, or the application withdrawn.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): What number of those applying were granted allowances?