

*War Appropriation—Army*

air force. She informs me that while she was employed in the aeroplane factory, and her husband was in the air force, she was in receipt of dependents' allowance. Then she said, "I thought I would respond to the call for women in the armed services, and so I joined the women's corps of the air service. Immediately upon joining, my dependents' allowance was cut off." I have a question to ask on that point, and I would ask the minister to comment upon it. She said, "While I was employed making aeroplanes I was receiving fifty cents an hour, and still received dependents' allowance, but when I joined the air corps"—receiving, I think, about ninety cents a day—"the dependents' allowance was cut off."

I suggest that the principle of the payment of dependents' allowance should throughout remain the same, even if a woman leaves commercial employment and joins an active service women's corps. I should like the minister to make some comment on this case. If the statement made by this lady is correct, and I have every reason to believe that it is, there would seem to be something unfair, and a principle at stake. To my mind she should be entitled to a dependents' allowance, no matter where she is.

Mr. RALSTON: In reference to the first case, if my hon. friend mentioned it to me it has escaped my memory. I can deal with it only when we have the file. There must be some circumstances in connection with it with which I am not familiar and regarding which I do not propose to speak until I have the facts. If my hon. friend will give me the name and number, I shall try to get the facts to-night.

Mr. GRAYDON: Has the minister not come across similar cases?

Mr. RALSTON: No; I have not.

With regard to the other case, the provision of the pay and allowance regulations is that when the proposed recipient is a member of the defence forces of Canada a dependents' allowance is not granted. As a matter of fact, these cases are under consideration now and a recommendation has been put forward with regard to them.

Mr. GRAYDON: The question raised by the hon. member for New Westminster prompts me to bring a matter to the attention of the minister at this time which I consider is the appropriate time. This matter was referred to when the minister was making his opening statement. I refer to the difference in pay to those serving in the Canadian Women's Army Corps and those serving in the Canadian army.

[Mr. Reid.]

The argument is advanced, particularly in labour circles, that equal pay should be received for equal service as between men and women. In view of the widespread interest which has been shown in this differentiation in pay as between men and women in the forces, perhaps the minister would give the committee some indication as to why the women in the armed forces of Canada are paid less than the men. I should like to have some explanation as to why this rate has not been increased.

Mr. RALSTON: I dealt with this matter the other evening when answering the hon. member for North Battleford. I indicated at that time that I could only speculate as to the basic reason why the women in the Canadian Women's Army Corps, the women's division of the air force, and the navy received less pay than the men. It begins, I think, with the organization of the Auxiliary Territorial Service when it was provided that they should receive only a portion of what was paid to the men. My hon. friend asks me why. Here again I can only speculate. I would suggest to him, as I suggested to the hon. member for North Battleford, that while there are certain services in the army, navy and air force which women can perform, they are not in the combatant services and therefore are not required to do the same type of work as the men.

I may say quite frankly to the committee that with regard to trades pay, which is an additional pay, I have felt that if a woman is following the same trade as a man, there should be equal trades pay for her. I may say that the matter of both basic pay and trades pay has been the subject of consideration by an interdepartmental committee and by the defence council, and is now before the government. I do not think there is anything I can add to that because the matter is under active consideration at this moment.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I should like to ask the minister a question concerning the matter of the insurance principle for pensions for those who volunteer for active service. There seems to be a distinct difference between those who are serving in Canada and those who have gone overseas. On several occasions the minister has put up a sound argument as to why his headquarters staff should remain where they are. He has contended that they must obey orders. Men, once they have volunteered for active service, must go where they are ordered to go by their superior officers. I know of many instances, but I have in mind one in particular of a young chap who volunteered and served on the west coast for over a year. He was admitted as an A1 man, and he believed himself to be perfectly