

to the farmers of my county who cannot get any help and who complain about it. If he has extra farm help, that is all right; the farmers of my county will be glad to have it to assist them with their crops.

Let me explain, sir, that besides the cases of farmers who are now in the camps, I have had at times to fulfil duties which should have been performed by the medical officers of the army. A number of them are incompetent, and everyone knows that, with a few exceptions, the medical officers in the army are the dregs of the medical profession. I do not insult anybody when I say so. When a boy comes to my office and speaks with difficulty, with his mouth round open, I ask him if he has a goitre, and sometimes he says, yes, although he has been classified A. I can quote such cases to the minister. I have sat and listened to these men. There are other boys classified in category A who suffer from rupture, and some from chronic appendicitis. Is it the job of a member to attend to such cases? Not at all, but the member of parliament has to do that work because some doctors are incompetent, and because some doctors in the army are under the impression that all these boys go there to play theatre, to enact a comedy, not to enlist. You remember, sir, the pathetic speech which was made by the Minister of National War Services when he was deputy minister of that department, at London, giving appalling figures about the health condition of youth in this country. He said himself that he was dumb-founded, that it was appalling. These things are said and we have tried to help these fellows. In my humble view, when a young man is not physically fit, when he is not in a condition to be an asset to the army, it is much better to leave him at home than to pay him soldier's pay and have his dependents given an allowance. Then he is a burden to the state and there is no reason why he should be kept in the army. But there is an obstinacy among soldiers who do their best to keep in the army, at the expense of the country, men who are totally unfit. I have the files. They are at the minister's disposal and at the disposal of every member of the house, and they show that in a great many cases insufficient care and attention had been paid to soldiers who were in bad health. Of course, it was my duty, not only as a member of parliament but as a citizen, to look into these cases, because those who were in charge, whose duty it was to do so, neglected to perform it, on the principle, as stated by a minister, that I was the last man to speak about fellows in

uniform at headquarters, who had never been in a theatre of war, because I had not been in the army myself. That is childish.

I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that boys from my county have tried twice to enlist because they wanted to get into the army, and afterwards they were discharged. It shows their willingness to join the army, and it corroborates what I have already said. For a time young men had to go a considerable distance for medical examination. They had to go from Rivière du Loup to Quebec city for that test, at their own expense if they were found unfit. But they went just the same. I saw one fellow who had what was called hammer-toes. The toes turned under the foot. He could not walk; it was very painful. In these cases the toes are turned under the foot just as the fingers might be on the hand, and it is impossible for such men to walk. Yet they are kept in the army. I had all sorts of descriptions of sore feet presented to me and these cases were pretty bad to listen to, but I had to describe them to the officials of the department. Very often the ailment caused something like paralysis of the leg. I am a layman so far as the medical art is concerned; nevertheless I had to look after these cases to see that the men would not be a burden on the army. Moreover, if the minister will look at some of the files he will see that some of his officers have rendered justice to certain fellows who have been called by telling them that they were right not to listen to the registrar. I agree with that, because in some cases the correspondence was so mixed up in the registrar's office. But they gave them an opportunity to stay at home.

Mr. KNOWLES: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, may I ask whether there is a quorum in the house?

The CHAIRMAN: There is just a quorum.

Mr. MacNICOL: The quorum has just come in.

The CHAIRMAN: Members behind the curtains can be counted.

Mr. POULIOT: Because they are heard, I suppose, there being no wall that separates us from them.

These are sad cases to which I am referring. Take a young man who is needed on the farm. He is kept in the hospital all the time at the expense of the country. I do not see the use of keeping him there when he is unfit, and afterwards the medical officers are bound to declare him physically unfit. Let me tell the committee what happened to one young