

I am going to do. I do not have to do anything in regard to the matter. Every member of this House knows what is right and what is wrong with respect to the conduct of private individuals and of soldiers. I would not want to admit—in fact I would take exactly the opposite position—that the soldiers who have enlisted have conducted themselves in any but a soldierly and gentlemanly way, with very few exceptions. There are exceptions in the conduct of civilians and there may have been exceptions among the soldiers; but, so far as I am able to judge, they have been very few indeed. There have been no serious complaints to the department in regard to the conduct of soldiers. Perhaps on some occasions they have been blamed when they were not blameworthy, but, as I say, the commanding officers know what their duties are, and I feel that the soldiers will conduct themselves as they should. The blame must not be placed on the soldiers on all occasions because we know of many occasions when the civilians were at least as blameworthy as the soldiers. I do not think that the incident to which the hon. member refers, or the circumstances arising out of it, are sufficiently grave, to base an argument upon, and I do not anticipate any difficulty in the future.

The hon. members for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) and Halifax (Mr. A. K. Maclean) raised a very important question and I do not at all complain of their doing so. We have done a big thing in this country with regard to voluntary enlistment. We went at it in a certain way, adopting the system of recruiting by battalions, appointing recruiting officers and making as many appointments as were necessary. As the war went on, there accumulated overseas and in Canada a large number of officers. Many of these have been retired to private life in the last three or four months. It is sometimes a good deal easier to get the uniform on a soldier than to get it off, but most of the soldiers are willing, when there is nothing further for them to do and they have performed their full duty, to revert to civil life.

Mr. CARVELL: I did not find fault with the employment of returned soldiers. I think that the man who has gone overseas and returned is entitled to anything the country can give him. I found fault with the men who never went overseas. I was told in St. John, I think it was two weeks ago to-day, by a returned soldier, that, of 176 officers of the staff of the Maritime Provinces, only 14 or 15 had ever been over-

[Sir Edward Kemp.]

seas. I have no personal knowledge of the matter.

Sir EDWARD KEMP: The question whether or not a man has been overseas is sometimes important, and sometimes not, in deciding questions of employment. I have had an investigation made with respect to the headquarters staff and the staffs of different divisions to ascertain if any men could be let out and allowed to revert to civil life. This is a big and difficult task, but the investigation has been completed and we have made great progress. In the division from which my hon. friend comes, No. 6, it is necessary to have a great many officers. That has just been investigated, and I have not yet received the report in respect to it. I wish to assure hon. members that it is not the policy or intention of the department to allow abuses, if there are any. On the other hand, I think my hon. friend will admit that, perhaps, sometimes when they see men in uniform there is a tendency to think they are doing nothing. Hon. members may be entirely mistaken. A man who wears a uniform is a marked man. I have heard this question raised very often and I have heard decent hardworking officers criticised, when the parties criticising did not know the real occupation of the officers. There are hundreds of officers in this country who would have made just as good officers, if they had been able to go to the front, as those who were fortunate enough to get to the front. As a general rule, an officer is considered fortunate if he is able to get to the front. An officer said to me the other day: We have been held in Canada and we have been asked to do the dirty work—using that term in the same sense that there is not as much kudos in doing work at home as in going to the front. There are a lot of men in Canada, who have performed splendid service, and it is not their fault that they have not been able to get to the front. Because of our system of organizing by battalions and appointing a full quota of officers, we have had more officers than were needed. The situation is not an easy one. It has caused me concern; but I am prepared to handle it in as fair and decent a way as possible. I am glad that the question has been raised by my hon. friends from Halifax and Carleton counties, and I am prepared to discuss it frankly. I have no fault to find with the remarks made by the hon. gentlemen.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I do not think we should leave this subject without the min-