

publicly, but I think it is absolutely sound—that we in the army are, if I may put it crudely, simply the customers for a certain supply of technical personnel. That is not confined to medical men alone; it has to do with engineers, with some chemists and with some scientists. This directorate of national selective service, which has under it the bureau of wartime technical personnel, is able in the first place to state where the supply is, because it would have full records with regard to that matter—that is, the supply of medical men as well as the supply of other technical personnel—and at the same time it is able to receive requisitions from the army, navy, air force and any other branch of the service that needs technical men, and is able to make a distribution and to give advice which it is impossible for one particular service to give to these medical men. They know what the supply is; they know what the demand is, and those two can be put together. That bureau, it seems to me, is the place where the medical men should be assisted to solve their problem in connection with their duty to their community. I have already communicated that view to the president of one university, in regard to a conference which is to be held here very soon with respect to another technical profession. I have said that I did not think it was the place of the army to attempt to do that, but rather that we should present our requisitions to the director of national selective service and ask him to advise us in the light of the supply and demand.

One point, the one with which my hon. friend began, is new to me; that is, with regard to the calling up of a certain higher age group in military district No. 3, compared with the other districts. That, of course, comes under national war services. I cannot explain to my hon. friend why men of the group from twenty-one to thirty should be called up in military district No. 3, while the group from twenty-one to twenty-five are called up in the other districts. Probably the reason he gives is the correct one, namely that a shortage has developed in the lower age groups in the particular district. I can only say to him that I will bring the matter to the attention of my colleague the Minister of National War Services. As I explained to the committee last night, I ask for a certain number of men; I do not ask for them by ages, and he supplies the number of men by issuing a proclamation calling up whatever age group may be necessary.

Mr. McCANN: The anomaly of the situation is that the reason why they are calling up men of the group from twenty-one to thirty

in military district No. 3 is that recruiting has been so successful that there is a shortage of younger men there. That rather reacts against them.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): I know in my district we have had a large number of married men over twenty-five years of age called up.

Mr. RALSTON: The hon. member for Témiscouata mentioned several points. I am sure he will not expect me to go at length into a speech which rambled over a great deal of territory, but I want to refer to one or two salient points. I am not sure that I shall convince him with regard to the good disposition of the Department of National Defence toward French-Canadians. I can say, however, that I would hope to be able to convince the committee and the country.

First let me refer to the individual case to which he referred; that is, the case of the young man who was granted leave of absence for six months. The committee will remember that yesterday I indicated that the application was recommended by the national war service board. It was forwarded to the district officer commanding of military district No. 5, who recommended it; it was forwarded to headquarters, and headquarters approved it. That was all in order. But the regiment to which the young man belonged moved west, and the young man himself moved with the regiment. The district staff officer communicated by telephone with the district staff officer on the west coast, and he stated that the officer in command of the regiment advised him—that is, the western staff officer—that at the time notification to leave was received the result of a medical board was pending. Instead of transferring the man to No. 5 district depot, which is the district depot at Quebec, they took him with the regiment to Nanaimo, notwithstanding the board that was pending. My hon. friend may know the officer commanding the regiment. After arrival at Nanaimo, during the confusion of getting settled the matter of the medical board was overlooked. It came to notice a few days later, and at some later time the medical board was held. I do not know whether my hon. friend will be relieved or otherwise to learn that a telegram has been received from the general officer commanding in chief, Pacific command, advising that this young man is being discharged, category E, and that no action was necessary on the question of leave. That was the result of two long distance telephone conferences with the west coast.