

*War Appropriation—Army*

There will be an opportunity for my hon. friend to deal with this matter when the bill is before the house or in committee. I do not know whether he was in the committee or not, but this matter was pretty thoroughly discussed the other night.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: What I had in mind was to place before the minister and the committee the need there is at this time for the establishment in this country of a system of national service life insurance similar to that in effect in the United States.

Mr. RALSTON: That was discussed the other night.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: The matter discussed the other night had to do with policies that might be lapsed by reason of a man being in the service.

Mr. RALSTON: And also insurance. The Sparkman Act was discussed.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: This has nothing to do with the Sparkman act; this is the national service insurance which is in effect in the United States.

Mr. RALSTON: That was also brought up.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I was here all through the discussion.

Mr. RALSTON: I think it was the hon. member for York West (Mr. Adamson) who raised the question. I do not want to be understood as shutting off my hon. friend, but if he could bring up this matter again I would appreciate it. As I said, there were several questions asked which I promised to answer so far as I could at an early day. I think it was the hon. member for Lake Centre who asked a question with regard to the procedure respecting men in the United States who might opt to serve in the armed forces of Canada rather than be inducted into the United States army.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: And also what was being done to secure the enlistment of these men in the United States.

Mr. RALSTON: By agreement with the United States we are not permitted to recruit actively in that country. We are permitted to place before the men called up by selective service their right to opt for service in the Canadian forces. That is done through the Canadian enlistment centres, the list of which already has been given. It is not a very long list now; I think they are in St. Paul, Boston, Detroit and Seattle. It would obviously be impossible to have a Canadian

[Mr. Ralston.]

officer or other rank at every draft board in the United States, but the rights of Canadian nationals are publicized through the enlistment centres. In addition to that our officers have visited many of the draft boards; there are at least 6,500 draft boards, so that of course they have not visited them all, by any means, but a great deal of publicity has been given in the newspapers, and in addition of course there has been much publicity through letters to these men from their friends in Canada.

When an individual presents himself at an induction centre or before the draft board in the United States, he has an opportunity to decide whether he will serve in the armed forces of the United States or exercise his right to serve with the Canadian forces. A plan recently has been under discussion whereby United States national selective service authorities would communicate by form letter with all non-declarants, to inform them of their right to opt. Under the plan it is proposed to supply copies of these letters in each case to the appropriate Canadian authorities, who then would be able to get in touch with these men, either directly or by letter. In addition to that a memorandum was issued by selective service headquarters in the United States to all local boards, just last month, giving instructions that for all co-belligerent nations, who have made agreements with the United States—and Canada is one of them—posters pointing out the right of electing service in the forces of one's own nation would be distributed to local draft boards and would be displayed in their offices, and literature concerning service in one's own national forces would be kept on hand at those offices. That is the extent to which notice is given to Canadians in the United States respecting their right to serve in Canada.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: When was that notice sent out by the United States government?

Mr. RALSTON: Local board memorandum No. 129, as amended May 2, 1942.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: What is the total enlistment to date in the Canadian army of Canadian citizens resident in the United States?

Mr. RALSTON: I cannot give that to my hon. friend, though perhaps I have something here that may help. No, I have not North America separate from South America, though I think I could break that down. The total there, I may say, for both North