

*War Appropriation—Army*

Mr. RALSTON: I know we bought the Halifax hotel, but I had nothing to do with it. I want to say to my hon. friend—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I have to go; I am sorry.

Mr. RALSTON: I do not think the dying declaration of my hon. friend as he leaves the chamber is quite fair.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I could come back and discuss the Halifax hotel. Let me tell the minister this: the people of Halifax know about that deal and they do not approve of it.

Mr. RALSTON: The person who took the Halifax hotel will discuss it. This is something new. We have the committee addressed from the back benches by an hon. member on his way out of the chamber. In the case of the Waverley hotel there were very strong representations from the city of Halifax. They did not want it taken off the tax roll. The result was—and I say it frankly—what may prove to be an improvident bargain made in connection with the Waverley hotel, not because of the amount paid, but I believe it was the wrong way to take it. At the same time so many representations were made on the part of the city of Halifax that it was felt by the department in this case they should lease the hotel and attempt to try out the two methods side by side. One method was to purchase the Hillside hotel, and the other was the leasing or taking the possession and the use of the Waverley hotel.

The hon. member mentioned the city of Montreal. I say to him that I think the crown will come out well in connection with the investment he mentioned in the city of Montreal. The investment in the city of Montreal was in connection with a house for the C.W.A.C.'s. I would very much rather take that house under the terms under which we have it, the terms of purchase, than under a lease to use it and then have to return it at the end of the war, and to pay claims which would be made in the exchequer court for the use of the property, plus the cost of the capital expenditures necessary in order to make it livable for the purposes for which we want to use it.

My hon. friend mentioned subsistence allowance. May I say that the subsistence allowance was increased from \$1 to \$1.25 for other ranks not very long ago. The officers' allowance was \$1.50 or \$1.55. It was increased to \$1.70. The hon. member was speaking of the officers of the air force. The army has a large number of young officers here. Some of these young officers are finding it hard to make ends meet so far as their subsistence is

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

concerned. They are probably contributing something out of their pay in order to provide board for themselves. The situation is that in Ottawa it has been impossible to provide barracks for officers. It is a temporary situation. There will not always be that number of officers in Ottawa. The question was what was the best way to meet the situation as far as subsistence is concerned? I have had under consideration representations which have been made for an officers' mess. As a matter of fact active attention is being given to that matter at the moment. It was hoped that the situation would right itself but it has not happened. When we bring a young officer here we feel that something should be done. To provide barracks means capital expenditure and the purchase of a building or the erecting of one. The hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Hanson) complained about it; but we have to do either one thing or the other. I say to my hon. friend that I am just as fully alive to the difficulties of the younger officers as he is, particularly with regard to the subsistence allowance and to the fact that very often they have to go into their pockets to a certain extent. That applies to the C.W.A.C.'s who do not get as much pay as the men do.

With regard to the grotesque cases that my hon. friend has referred to in connection with dependents' allowances, I shall be glad to look into them. He has just touched the fringe of the many grotesque cases which the dependents' allowance board has. There are generally reasons or circumstances which members may not know and which explain the decision given. Let me say that these men on the board who are dealing with these matters all the time are men who have had experience, and men who have judgment. They are men who try to give consideration not simply to the letter of the law but to the merits of the case as well; and in instances where the allowance is not sufficient there is always the dependents' board of trustees to go to. I shall, of course, look into this case to which the hon. member for York-Sunbury has referred, and I shall bring it to the attention of the dependents' allowance board.

Mr. LACOMBE: I wish to make a few remarks concerning the second item.

(Translation): I notice that the estimates covering the operations of internment camps are \$4,700,178 less than those of last year. Such a decrease is no doubt due to the fact that a considerable number of interned people have been released since last year. It may not be the only reason, but it is certainly one of the reasons. However, one man is still the victim of a deliberate persecution which is