

War Appropriation

people are the backbone of recruiting before and during the war for the reserve army. I spoke on their behalf in the last house, when the minister's predecessor was here, in 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, when many of our young people were riding the rods in the summer looking for work. That is the type of youth that has gone to the war without any compulsion. The oldest regiments in Toronto are filled with youths of that type, sixteen, seventeen and eighteen years of age. Some units pick a particular school; some others form a cadet corps.

I am sorry that this regulation in regard to restricted industries was passed affecting those seventeen and eighteen years of age, and those from seventeen to forty-five. The high schools are nearing the end of the term, and many will be closing about the first of June, or earlier than usual. Many of the young people attending them want to make a little money this summer in order to go to university. I know some of them at North Toronto collegiate, a few at Lawrence Park collegiate, and others at Parkdale collegiate, Malvern, Riverdale and Humberside, and all the other collegiates. I started on the board of education, and I still take a great deal of interest in those attending school and in education work. Some of the fathers of these young people want their boys to go in the army, would rather see them in the army because, owing to the new regulations, they cannot, if of the age of seventeen, get work in the summer. Three youths near where I live in Eglinton riding are affected by these regulations, and rather than take a chance on getting work in the summer they joined the manning pool in the Royal Canadian Air Force last week. I saw them walking on the street yesterday in air force uniforms.

It is a great mistake to handicap our youth of these ages with all these regulations. If we had taken the right methods some years ago—it is not the fault of the present minister that the young people who rode the rods a few years ago did not get a fair deal from parliament—and had adopted an apprenticeship system such as I urged in 1936 and 1937, these young people would have signed up for three years as apprentices with military training and had lodging, pocket money, drill, clothing, and would have been learning some trade in key industries of many kinds. As a result, when the war broke out, we would have had 25,000 skilled mechanics available in the air force alone for service. That was the policy for which I worked hard for three or four years before the war. Some such policy has now been adopted in part in conjunction with the provinces, and that work is going on at Galt

[Mr. Church.]

and other places of vocational training, in relation to the war, as I advocated prior to the war on many occasions.

To-day there is so much confusion over the regulations that nobody seems to understand them or how they will be applied to the high schools. I have read the regulations; they are most conflicting and confusing, and scare war industries from giving work to those of seventeen years of age, and I cannot advise anybody regarding them. Some young people from our collegiates in Toronto have tried to get into the plants at Toronto and others into small arms plants. Some young people working in drug stores, boys of fourteen to sixteen, who earned \$4 a week after school, have been let out. I do not know where it is going to end. Why penalize these youths whose fathers are at the war? These regulations are not fair and proper. I know the minister has taken a great deal of interest in education and cadet services, and I hope he will see that something is done for the youth of our country to clarify these rules which at present may bear heavily on the population of our secondary schools. Some of these of sixteen or seventeen years of age want to go to Toronto university, or to the school of science, but if they cannot work in war plants and make a little money in the summer they cannot go to the university. The various boards of education should have been consulted before any such regulations were passed. Some school boards before the war abolished the cadet movement in the schools, although the government has done a great deal of good work to restore it. I know the present Minister of National Defence would not have struck out the cadet vote when it came before the house four or five years ago, if he had been here because he knows what the militia owe to it. A great many of our young people of seventeen and eighteen are joining the air force as a result of this army rule. They are splendid young people, as anyone can see by the parades such as I saw in Toronto the other day.

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend has just reinforced what has already been said on this point. At the moment I cannot say more to the committee than that it had not been borne in forcibly on my mind that this regulation did affect the seventeen-year olds. As I say, it was not in my department, but I was a member of the government which passed the regulation and take full responsibility for it. I realize also that if any change is to be made, it must be made at once, in view of the young people coming out of the schools. I am not