

*War Appropriation—Army*

same applies to civilian doctors. But I say sincerely and frankly to the minister, because I am in earnest, that in many cases the civilian doctors rely on the army doctors, and some of them are not very attentive to the medical examinations of recruits. They were being paid only a dollar, and did not realize that they had made a lot of money as family physicians. This is not true of many civilian doctors, but it is true of some of them. On the other hand, I understand the army's position. The army doctor will say, "Well, this man has been examined by his family doctor, and placed in category A—or E, as the case may be. He knows the family well, and understands the circumstances, and therefore it is something like a political football. I understand they have many men to look after.

Here is another file. Doctor Fortin wrote me this letter with respect to one of these men:

(Translation): As evidenced by the enclosed certificate, the above named man is suffering from a disease which should make him absolutely unfit for military service. In spite of that, an English-speaking physician did not hesitate to include him within category "A". Is the physical condition of a man totally disregarded? Sooner or later, and perhaps within a short time, this man will have to undergo a rather serious operation. I cannot understand why such an attempt is made to increase the number of unfit men, in view of the fact that this man had a job and was able to earn his living.

(Text): That man could look after himself. Here is the affidavit from the doctor:

(Translation): This is to certify that this man is suffering from an active suppurating otitis in the right ear, which makes him absolutely unfit for military service. This man should normally be put in category "E".

(Text): Then, I have the following memorandum respecting E-626,786:

(Translation): The man is suffering from anaemia. He is unable to withstand long marches, because the little toe of the right foot overlaps the next toe. Chafing occurs during long walks, and this is quite painful. The man cannot wear regulation boots, and even with other shoes he is unable to withstand long marches.

His left shoulder and arm were scalded during his youth, and since that time, his skin is quite sensitive in that part of the body. He still has very large scars in front of the shoulder and behind, and also on the upper part of the arm.

He is suffering from rheumatism in the left arm after exertion. He is unable to carry a rifle on his left shoulder.

Finally, the bone at the base at the spine is very much enlarged, so that the man is unable to assume an erect position when sitting, and even when walking he has to stoop in order to avoid pain; as soon as he stands erect he breaks into perspiration.

[Mr. Pouliot.]

(Text): What I have read states that the last bone of the spine was just as big as a closed fist, that the man could not stand upright, nor could he sit normally. I had to fight his case, because he could not become a good soldier.

Then, here is case Q-39M-3119, respecting a soldier whose toes turned under his foot. I believe this condition is called hammer toes. He could not walk, nor could he wear shoes without great pain. Afterwards he was classified in E category. He should never have been accepted in the first instance. It was not proper to accept him as a soldier, because he could not perform a soldier's duties.

Mr. MacNICOL: Were these men passed and accepted?

Mr. POULIOT: Oh, yes.

Mr. MacNICOL: They could not have been subjected to any medical inspection.

Mr. POULIOT: Surely; I shall have something to say to the committee about that. These are not theoretical cases. I bring these facts before the minister. I know he is willing to run his department well. We are the ones who get the immediate reaction to these matters. I hold no rancour against anyone. I do not care about Mr. Mercier or Mr. Rathbone in Quebec city and I do not want to hurt them unjustly, but I think it is a shame when these fellows are taken into the army when they are sick like that.

Mr. McCANN: Does not the fault lie with the local physicians in the communities in which these men lived? The fault cannot be placed upon the military authorities, as the hon. member is probably attempting to do. There may be some blame upon the military authorities for not discharging these men, but primarily the duty lay upon the family physicians who examined them when they were inducted.

Mr. POULIOT: I agree with the hon. member for Renfrew South to a certain extent. As I said before, there are responsibilities in both quarters. There may be some responsibility upon the family doctor, but the fact is that these cases are on record. Here is one case where a man had been classified E by the family doctor and that classification was not considered at all by the army. He was kept in the army. Many of these men have been several months in the army.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Has the hon. member any evidence to show that these men applied to the military officers for reexamination and were refused?

Mr. POULIOT: Yes, I have many cases. I have taken these files at random. I do not