

Canadian Forces Act

of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada. Paragraph 2 of the letters reads:

At a meeting of our national governing body, held recently, it was decided to advise the government that the Y.M.C.A. is ready to use the resources of its organization to provide service to those who enlist in these armed forces. Our action is based on experience in serving Canadian personnel in the armed forces in the Boer war and two world wars.

In the event that this offer warrants your consideration, we would be glad to have a deputation wait upon you or the Minister of National Defence to discuss its implementation.

That letter is signed by the president of the organization, and directed to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) of Canada. He replied on November 30, 1950, and stated in part:

The armed forces greatly appreciate this offer, but the situation with regard to Canadian troops in Korea is continually changing and it is difficult at the present stage to establish the requirements for auxiliary services. We would appreciate it, therefore, if the matter could be deferred for the moment until the situation is clarified.

The Salvation Army made its offer on July 16, 1951. The letter sets out in detail that its trained personnel is available and states:

Secondly, we have always specialized in welfare service. Whether this be in homeland or base camps, in the forward areas, or in the cities and towns where men of the forces spend their periods of leave, we are able and willing to provide facilities where such are desired.

As a particular case in point, it has recently been brought to our notice that there are at times many men on leave in Edmonton, and the suggestion has been made that we might provide a canteen and recreation centre . . .

That letter is signed by William R. Dalziel, commissioner. He received a reply dated July 30, 1951, which reads in part:

On my return to the office I have your letter of July 16 and I most sincerely appreciate the offer of service of the Salvation Army for the spiritual and physical well-being of the men and women of our forces.

In regard to the matter of establishing canteens and recreation centres, this question is constantly under review as a necessary service in the important work of maintaining good morale in the forces. Up to the present time we have been able to provide these facilities within our own resources, but I can assure you that if the situation changes to the extent that outside assistance is required, your offer on behalf of the Salvation Army will be given every consideration.

This correspondence reveals the offers of assistance that were made by these several organizations. As yet no one representing the government has made any clear-cut answer about the voluntary offers of service made by these four great organizations. They have been refused, or at least have not been given favourable attention. I feel, and I am more reinforced than ever in my opinion by the recent correspondence I have received since this debate first started, that men and women in every part of our country are asking the government to allow these organizations, willing as they are, to accept the

responsibility for welfare services. They are qualified to discharge those responsibilities and most of the armed forces are desirous of the facilities of these organizations. These responsibilities cannot be discharged in the same manner by any organization of the armed forces themselves. These groups should be given the opportunity of providing the material and spiritual benefits that otherwise may not be as readily procurable for the men in the armed forces.

I join with the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra in once more repeating an appeal that when great organizations such as these, whose record of service over the years has been one of credit and distinction, are prepared, regardless of any difficulties that may exist in Korea, to provide their services at their expense, they should not be denied the opportunity. Any arguments that were advanced with respect to conditions in Korea certainly have no application to the 27th brigade now en route to Europe. I suggest once more, with all the force at my command, that those serving in Europe should have immediately available to them the services which each and every one of these organizations is qualified and willing to give.

Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon): Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to add some further words in regard to the questions I originally asked concerning this important matter. When I was first prompted to bring before the house the matter of welfare services for our troops, particularly those serving in Korea, it was because of certain reports I had read in various journals published in Canada and also because of certain intimations that had reached me from men who had experience in that particular theatre of war. The discussion has been continuing around this problem and I feel that the case has been adequately presented to the members of the house. I had not previously had the opportunity to learn of the correspondence that has just been placed on the record by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker); but that correspondence indicates more and more that there is a real problem arising out of the matter of providing adequate welfare and entertainment services for our troops.

I do not think I need labour the point that the Canadian forces are largely a civilian army made up of civilian soldiers, and that remark applies to the other branches of the services as well. It seems to me rather remarkable that the overwhelming support pledged by the four organizations experienced in this field of welfare for the troops has in each instance been denied by the government. Because of their experience and because of