

War Appropriation

pictures of their majesties in recruiting offices than to send copies of speeches regarding the plebiscite, which was a waste of paper. It would have been better to use that paper to print a picture of the commander in chief of the army and give it a place of honour in our recruiting centres.

On January 1 the *New York Times* said that the United States army had promoted 575 to the rank of colonel. It was a great promotion on account of the new year. But now the picture is not so good as it should be regarding French-speaking officers in the army. Take, for instance, what happened in Hong Kong; how many were French-Canadians? There was a large number of French-Canadians there. We have no news of them, no more news now of those who are prisoners at Hong Kong than we have of the probe that took place not long ago. The number of French-Canadian officers was so small that they took men who had not a drop of French blood in their veins and put them down as officers just to show one or two more.

Mr. DUPUIS: Two officers from my riding were French-Canadians, both sons of Mr. Pierre D'Avignon, from Marieville.

Mr. POULIOT: There may be two, but there was only one there.

Mr. DUPUIS: Perhaps there was one from Témiscouata.

Mr. POULIOT: Oh, yes, and his name was Lapointe, a soldier, not an officer; we have no officers from our district. I am sorry that the leader of the opposition has vanished, like the prophet of old in his chariot of fire. Every time I have something to say that would be good for him to learn, he disappears.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Maybe if the hon. gentleman had something to say my leader would stay.

Mr. POULIOT: My hon. friend should keep quiet, in preparing such wonderful speeches as he does, when he compares his deskmate to Cicero and Demosthenes and others of the world's great orators—

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): I am not an orator like my hon. friend, but when I speak in the house I have something to say.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us come back to the question before the committee.

Mr. POULIOT: Just to please the hon. member for St. Paul's, I have here in my hand an editorial from a good paper although it is Tory, the *Toronto Telegram*, of March 25, 1942. It is headed "Secret proceedings of inquiry must be given in full to the nation".

[Mr. Pouliot.]

That is the Hong Kong inquiry. We want some information. We are entitled to have complete information about that and about everything, but everything is hidden. We have a right to get complete information about the usefulness of every branch of the Department of National Defence, as we have a right to know who was guilty in connection with the Hong Kong expedition. But we shall never have it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order. I would point out that the matter referred to is sub judice, and it is not in order to discuss matters that have been referred to the royal commission. I understand that a great deal of leeway is allowed in this committee, and some remarks have already been made on that subject, but I think that in the future conduct of this debate no further reference should be made to the royal commission or the subject matter of its inquiry.

Mr. POULIOT: Coming back to November 12 when the minister was away, the estimates of the department were in the hands of his colleague the Minister of National Defence for Air. I asked him a direct question:

There was something else I read, this time not in the *Toronto Telegram* but in the *Ottawa Journal* of September 24, stating that a census of the religious beliefs of the troops was being taken. I do not see how it is possible to do that when it is not possible to learn how many French Canadians have enlisted in a certain regiment. All that information should be available.

Mr. Power: It is on the attestation card. The man states to what religion he subscribes, and usually it is on his identification disc as well.

Mr. Pouliot: That is fine, but I should like to know the number of French Canadians who are serving in regiments such as the Black Watch, the highlanders and so on.

Mr. Power: I believe that information can be obtained.

Mr. Pouliot: Thank you.

That is from *Hansard* of November 12, 1941, page 4695.

Since that I have got nothing in the way of information about the number of French-Canadians in the whole country who have enlisted in all regiments. That is what I want to know. If the figure is good, that is well; if the figure is bad, we are ready to take our medicine, but we want to know and we have a right to know. The amount of this estimate is \$997,000,000. Is it not possible to take from this amount \$100 or \$200 to check the payrolls of all regiments in the treasury office and see the number of French names which appear thereon? Of course there might be