

War Appropriation

We would like to find out why there is such a scarcity of pants for us while the recruits are able to be dressed in such a manner. We would like very much the cooperation of the Guelph *Daily Mercury* by publishing this letter and letting the people know how we are being dressed as compared with the soldiers back home.

So if you would be so kind as to find out why we can't get any more clothes from home, we certainly will be very much obliged to you and your paper for the kind assistance in this matter. So let us know at your earliest possible convenience. Our return address is:

The Boys of "C" Troop
16th Battery
12th Field Regt.,
England, March 25,
R.C.A. Canadian Army Overseas.

I should be glad if the minister is now in a position to give an answer.

Mr. RALSTON: This is the first complaint I have ever heard of or received with regard to dress or clothing in England. Within the last two weeks I received word from General McNaughton with particular regard to the quality of the battle-dress issued over there, which is Canadian made; two suits of battle-dress are allowed. I do not understand what the young men say about the difficulty of getting a second pair of trousers. I am quite satisfied that—I was going to say, something has slipped down—

Mr. REID: Give them kilts.

Mr. RALSTON: I am sure that this must be the odd case. I shall certainly look into it and shall even ask England about C Troop, 16th Battery, R.C.A.

Mr. MacINNIS: During the rather long time that the Department of National Defence has been under review, I do not believe I have said anything. Most of the matters I would have raised and the questions I would have asked were raised or asked by someone else, and I was satisfied with the minister's replies.

However, just before the house adjourned on Friday last the hon. member for Vancouver South raised two points in this discussion which went beyond a mere asking for information and dealt with questions of military policy. When the minister suggested that the hon. member seemed to think only of one of Canada's coasts as being in danger, the hon. member remarked that he represented a Vancouver or a coast constituency and felt that, because of that, he should be more concerned with the west coast. I also represent a west coast constituency, but I would not wish to have it supposed that, because I have not stressed defence matters,

[Mr. Gladstone.]

I am not concerned with the defence of either coast or with Canada's whole war effort. I do not want the hon. member for Vancouver South to feel that I am criticizing him if I disagree with him. I realize that he has far more experience with military affairs than I have. But he raised a question of general policy. What he said was this, as reported in *Hansard*, page 2066.

It seems to me the committee would be well advised at this stage to try to get a broad picture of Canadian army activities both abroad and at home.

While I may not know very much about the details of military operations, I think I have about as much grasp as the average person of what the broad principles are, and I must admit that what the hon. member for Vancouver South said on Friday disturbed me greatly.

First he mentioned that we must avenge Hong Kong. I think that is a bad approach to Canada's war effort. Then he said that we must build up an army of the Pacific which would be able to fight on its own, fight by itself. It seems to me that that does not fit into the strategy of this war, because there is nothing clearer than that Canada cannot fight on her own.

Mr. GREEN: On a question of privilege, I am sure the hon. member for Vancouver East would not misrepresent me intentionally. Perhaps I did not make myself clear. What I meant was that there should be a complete army—not that it should fight by itself, but that it should be an army rather than a group of detachments to defend the coast.

Mr. MacINNIS: I mentioned when I began that I hoped the hon. member for Vancouver South would not interpret my remarks as a criticism in the sense in which criticism in this chamber is generally regarded. But the words which I quoted are definitely the words he used; he mentioned an army which would be able to fight on its own, fight by itself.

I think I have previously pointed out the enormous amount of equipment which would be required if Canada were to lead an offensive war on the Pacific, and what I said at that time holds good to-day. No matter what impression may be made locally by what an hon. member may say, we should keep the general situation clearly in mind. We should make it clear—and I think it needs to be made clear in Canada, because of the feeling in some parts of the country—that we are engaged in a world war, a war in which practically the whole world is fighting the axis powers. That fact is as important in its application to one of Canada's coasts as it is to the other.