

*War Appropriation—Army*

Mr. RALSTON: You mean before he goes to one of these camps?

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Yes. Is it the ability to read and write?

Mr. RALSTON: The army examiner at the depot, recruiting centre or induction centre examines the man and decides whether or not his mental capacity is such that he would be able to absorb training and give promise of becoming a useful soldier. If that is decided, the army examiner makes his report accordingly and the man goes to the centre, where the officer in charge has that knowledge of his qualifications and knows what he requires in the way of special attention. I am also reminded that not at North Bay, not at Joliette, but throughout the camps the directorate of army education which is under Colonel Kilpatrick, who is known to a great many hon. members, has the benefit of the help and co-operation of the Canadian Legion educational services, which, as hon. members know, has been operating in Canada and overseas ever since the beginning of the war. An attempt has been made to connect the legion services and those services which perhaps the army has more facilities to furnish, and put them together in the shape of something which would be useful primarily to make a man a better soldier—and I want to impress this upon the committee—because that is the army's job; but that effort cannot help but have its effect in fitting a man to be a better citizen as well. They are not given the frills or the embroidery; they are given good, sound education which will help them both in the army and in civilian life.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Could the minister give the percentage of the men enlisting in Canada who are classed as illiterate?

Mr. RALSTON: I cannot give that at the moment, but I will see if I can get it.

Mr. GRAYDON: I should like to make one observation in respect of a matter which came up a few moments ago, as to the use of the medical term "emotional instability". It seems to me that in connection with those who return from overseas who may come within that classification we should give some consideration to the use of another expression, perhaps that which was suggested by the hon. member for Renfrew South. I think our men who come back suffering either temporarily or permanently from that condition should be regarded as war-shock casualties instead of being called "emotionally unstable" or considered to have some mental incapacity, because it seems to me there is a vast difference. I think we owe that much to the men

[Mr. Castleden.]

who have gone through so much in the air, on land and at sea, and I should like to offer that suggestion to the minister. I believe some other term should be used in order to remove any vestige of stigma in that regard. I think the expression "war shock" would be proper and appropriate in that connection.

Mr. RALSTON: So far we have been using the term in connection with men who have been rejected, not in regard to men who have been discharged; I want to point that out.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I should like to ask whether in the medical examination given to a person offering to enlist, a thorough examination is made for venereal disease and, if not, why it is not considered feasible to do so.

Mr. RALSTON: I have discussed this matter before the committee on previous occasions. As was indicated in a return brought down, the situation is that the Wassermann test is not administered at the time of enlistment. The committee will recognize, and we are so advised by the medical authorities, that this is not necessary; that is to say, a man does not need to have a negative Wassermann test to be qualified to be admitted to the army or any other of the armed services. The point is to discover his condition, if he should have a positive reaction, and to see that he is treated promptly. What the army has done is to arrange and put into effect a system whereby men will be given a Wassermann test as soon as possible after enlistment. I may say that positive reactions do not always indicate v.d.s. or v.d.g.; but those who have positive reactions are immediately put under observation, and if the disease exists, they are given prompt treatment. The principal physical equipment necessary in connection with the Wassermann test is the laboratory equipment; as my hon. friend knows, it simply consists of taking a sample of the blood, and the laboratory facilities are used to test the blood and keep proper records. Arrangements have, I think, been made with every province whereby provincial laboratories are to be placed at the disposal of the armed forces, and these facilities are being made available. I am hoping that by July of this year we shall have facilities throughout Canada for making between three and four hundred thousand tests a year. In that connection I just wish to say that some people have the idea there has been no Wassermann test in the army. There has not been a universal Wassermann test, but I am told there have been over 143,000 Wassermann tests made by the Department of Pensions and National Health as well as the army, probably during the last one and a half to two years.