

ton East, was that at least there should be a ceiling on all transportation. I shall talk this matter over with the Minister of National Defence for Air and the Minister of National Defence for Naval Services.

Mr. MacNICOL: Does the minister mean that the ceiling would be uniform to the soldier no matter where he went?

Mr. RALSTON: I take it that what the hon. member for Edmonton East meant was that the longest trip would not exceed a certain fixed maximum. I think the hon. member is referring to a zone system, so that say from any place between Winnipeg and the coast the rate would be the same.

Mr. MacNICOL: I felt that a soldier returning from Halifax to Quebec, a soldier returning from Halifax to Toronto and a soldier returning from Halifax to Winnipeg or any other point west on his last leave should all be given the same rate.

Mr. RALSTON: The only rate that would be fair in that event would be the shortest distance. That would mean that the fellow living in Halifax and going to Truro would govern the rate from Halifax to Winnipeg. The idea of the hon. member for Edmonton East was a maximum, that no rate should exceed some fixed figure. I shall discuss the matter with the Minister of National Defence for Air and the Minister of National Defence for Naval Services. I do not hesitate to say that our personal inclinations are all one way. But we have to balance different considerations and give the very best study and attention we can to the question. I cannot say more than that.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Would that apply to length of leave as well?

Mr. RALSTON: With reference to length of leave, as I remember there are two forms in which leave is granted. There is the two-week leave every year. There is one two weeks after the first six months and there is another two weeks once each year after that. You cut into that leave very easily on a long trip. As a matter of fact—this is not in the book—I have reason to believe that commanding officers in cases of soldiers going long distances try to take account of that to some extent in allowing leave. Somehow or another they have a way of providing that the leave shall begin at such and such a date, although the soldier may not be in camp for perhaps a day before that actual date.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): Where they are given forty-eight hour leave at each end.

Mr. RALSTON: On embarkation leave there is provision that travelling time is out. The intention with regard to embarkation leave is that they shall have forty-eight hours at home, and necessary travelling time is given to provide for that. It is not the same with furlough. I understand the point and we shall discuss it.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Would the minister give some possible reasons that are advanced against giving soldiers, sailors or airmen free transportation on embarkation leave?

Mr. RALSTON: I cannot give my hon. friend any reasons from the point of view of public policy. There might be one reason, namely, traffic accommodation. There would be a great deal more use of the railways if free transportation were given, and the congestion which has been referred to would be increased. I do not believe that is really a reason against giving free transportation. I say that frankly, because I feel that the congestion which the hon. member for Davenport found—I say this with all due respect to him—was due to civilian travel just as much as to service travel. My feeling is, and I have said as much to the railways, that the armed services have done pretty well in the regulation of the flow of traffic by the men in the three forces and that civilians have not done any more than their fair share in the way of curtailing travel. That will be borne out by what one sees on the trains from day to day and on week-ends. The week-end rate has been cut out. I have only to go to the railways to see how many civilians are still taking advantage of week-ends to do travelling. I do not believe that we shall ever come to a situation in this country, so that this terrific jamming will not occur until we have passenger travel rationed and until a man has to show a certificate of near necessity before he buys a railway ticket. That is what is causing the trouble about which my hon. friend is talking. The railways have not got the cars. I know the kind of cars they are running out and the railways themselves will admit that they are not fit for soldiers or civilians as modern railway vehicles. But that is all they have.

With regard to the matter raised by the hon. member for Cape Breton South—he started this discussion—with reference to discrimination between the services, I have done everything I can and so have my colleagues to canvass these questions common to the service in order to see to it that conditions are exactly uniform with regard to travel and allowances. In connection with travel I have