

Mr. GREEN: Is there any reason why Canadian troops in our Pacific army should not be given some battle training against Japan? For example, Canadian officers and non-commissioned officers were sent from Britain to North Africa in order to get experience which they were to pass on to their units in Great Britain. Why is not something of that sort being done on the Pacific?

Mr. RALSTON: I cannot make any statement further than the one I have made. Developments will dictate the whole situation and whatever steps the government may take in order to carry out the policy I have just stated.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I should like to ask the minister a question with regard to the medical services. In case of an accident involving injury, who decides whether there shall be an investigation? We will say that a man is suffering from hernia as a result of injury. Who decides whether he is to receive an operation?

Mr. RALSTON: With regard to the investigation, if there is any doubt or confusion, or if it is necessary to take the statements of a number of people with regard to the circumstances surrounding an accident, a court of inquiry is immediately held for the purpose of ascertaining the facts.

As to who decides whether an operation shall be performed, I would presume—I have not the book before me—that this would be done on the advice of the medical officer.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I would point out what an injustice may sometimes arise from the decision whether or not to hold an inquiry. I drew the attention of the minister to this particular case last year. A man was injured during night operations at Petawawa camp. He reported his injury but did not receive any very great attention for a couple of weeks afterwards. Then he was found to be suffering from hernia, and it was recommended that he should have a truss. The history of the case shows that the man did not receive the truss until six months afterwards, until he was posted out west. After receiving the truss he constantly asked the medical authorities to operate on him, to fix him up so that he could continue his work in the army. They refused to do so. Later, in March of that year, he was discharged. Upon discharge he made application for pension, and here is where the injustice came in. Upon applying for pension he could not prove that he was injured on that night operation because there had been no court of inquiry. There was just the medical officer's slip putting him on night duty and

giving him a few pills. This man suffered, I believe, permanent injury on account of the delay in providing him with a truss and, second, from the delay in operating. Then he was discharged from the army and his application for pension was refused. Since that time we have been trying to get some justice for that man, but it is almost impossible to obtain any definite record of what happened on the evening when he claimed he was injured, and the Department of Pensions and National Health will take only the medical record from the records which the army have.

Mr. RALSTON: Are the officers or the non-commissioned officers or the comrades of the man available?

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Yes, and a statement was obtained from them. But when the man wrote to the non-commissioned officers who were there at the time they said they were not allowed to make any statement to him on the matter, that according to K.R. and O. it was not permissible to make that statement. I must add this, that after he got out of the army, being unable to carry on properly, application was made through the rehabilitation department and he did obtain hospital treatment and underwent an operation, and there may be some slight improvement since that time. But under the circumstances it scarcely seems that justice was done in this case. I believe that the new regulations with regard to insurance may do away with some such incidents, and that there is consequently an improvement, but it does not help this particular case.

In two other cases I have in mind, I think the decision of the medical officer was scarcely in accordance with good judgment. In one case the man was suffering from heart trouble as the result of an attack of typhoid fever, and he was discharged from the army and was told, "After a few months your heart will be better and you will be able to resume work." But that has not been borne out in the event.

Mr. RALSTON: The judgment of the medical officer in prescribing for him, or not prescribing for him?

Mr. CASTLEDEN: No. The medical officers told him to report in about three months.

Mr. RALSTON: Well, but I say, in prescribing for him and advising him what to do; that is where, my hon. friend thinks, the judgment of the medical officers was wrong?