

*War Appropriation—Army*

restricting clauses in the National Resources Mobilization Act removed so that this idle draftee army of some 73,000 men may be available for reinforcements overseas. It has been estimated that these men are costing the country \$2,000 a year each, which would mean a total of \$146,000,000. I presume that is a fair estimate. I believe that the minister will be recreant to the trust that is now reposed in him if he does not take immediate steps to provide the necessary reinforcements by the only possible method, the one to which I have just referred.

Mr. LECLERC: Is the hon. member favouring conscription?

Mr. BRUCE: We already have a conscription act on the statute books. I am favouring the removal of the ham-stringing clauses of that act.

Mr. LECLERC: Is the hon. member speaking for his party or for himself?

Mr. CASSELMAN: Where does the hon. member stand?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): We all know where he stands.

Mr. McCANN: At six o'clock the matter under discussion had to do with the pulhems system of examination of recruits and draftees coming into the army. I think it is generally conceded that the system in vogue is the best one that has been devised with reference to examinations. However, it has one short-coming which I should like to point out to the minister, namely, that it is based entirely upon any objective symptoms which the draftee may exhibit. I understand that the directions to medical officers consider only those objective symptoms. Another type of symptom which may arise with reference to any abnormal condition which a draftee may have, is what is known as the subjective symptoms, and known, perhaps, only to the man who is being examined.

Take, for instance, the case in point which was referred to by the hon. member for York-Sunbury, of the man who was a diabetic and who, upon his own statement, so stated. All the evidence was there that he was a diabetic, but his word was not taken by the examining officers, and they gave no consideration as to whether or not what he said was the truth.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): They were put on notice.

Mr. McCANN: Exactly, but they did not pay any attention to it. I submit that, in examining, a medical man can tell almost by intuition whether or not the truth is being told. More consideration ought to be given

[Mr. Bruce.]

to the statements of the man who is being examined than is given at the present time. I have in mind a young fellow who was admitted to the army, and his examination put him in as A-1 and he served a month in one of the training camps. He was called up under the National Resources Mobilization Act. That man was what is commonly known as a "bleeder", a haemophiliac, and there was no way of testing him. At the present time he is absent upon deferment because he is doing farm work, but he has received notice that he will be expected to return on the 1st of May. It is absolute nonsense to take back into the army a man of that type because, should any accident, even of a minor nature, happen to him, it is probable that it would be fatal. In addition to that, if he were there for six months or a year, and at a very considerable cost to the country, he would probably have to be discharged from the army, and it is quite probable that if he met with some accident while on duty he would be a pensioner, and this country would pay a pension for the rest of his life to a man who should never have been admitted to the army.

I should also like to ask the minister if further consideration has been given to the suggestion which was made in this house some time ago with reference to the amalgamation of the medical services in the armed forces; whether or not we are to continue to have three different groups of medical men, one in each branch of the armed service, or whether government policy in that regard has been changed. I would ask the minister, too, if the report of the assignment and procurement board has been given to the government and whether it is his intention to table it, and I invite him to make any comments which he may see fit at the present time with reference to whether he thinks that report should be acted upon, or whether, if that were done, it would be to the detriment of the service.

Mr. ADAMSON: Does the minister want to answer those questions now.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The minister on February 14 made some statements which are worthy of considerable attention. May I read brief records from *Hansard*, at page 442? First, speaking of the soldiers:

They do not want charity, but they want to know how they are to be assisted and how they are to be recognized, having regard to the fact that they have been away from employment conditions in this country for a number of years.

And again, speaking of the three defence services:

... all three services intend to take and are now taking a definite and positive interest in the prospective rehabilitation of soldiers, sailors and airmen.