

*Canadian Forces Act*

that I think more than ever calls for an explanation on the part of the government as to the reason why the Department of National Defence has seen fit to deny the auxiliary groups giving the benefit of their services in Korea. The record shows that on August 2, 1950, the general secretary of the Canadian Legion wrote to the Minister of National Defence, on instructions of the dominion president—using the words in the letter of that date—to

... offer the services of the Canadian Legion to be used in any way that you feel the organization might be helpful in the Korean cause.

As you know, we have kept alive the charters of both the Canadian Legion War Services and the Canadian Legion Educational Services and the boards of directors of both organizations have held fairly regular meetings even since the activities of both organizations were curtailed as a result of the cessation of hostilities of 1945.

If the Canadian Legion proper or either or both of the subsidiary organizations can be of any assistance to your department, either now or in the immediate future, we would be glad if you would advise us.

That letter was signed by T. D. Anderson, general secretary. The reply of the secretary to the minister reads in part:

Mr. Claxton has asked me to express his deep appreciation of your offer and to assure you that if your organization can be of service in any way, you will be notified immediately.

There is nothing further on the record until October 30, 1951. Following what appeared in the press there is a further letter from the general secretary to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton). It is dated October 30, 1951, and reads as follows:

We have noted, with some concern, reports which have appeared from time to time in the press reference the welfare of our troops now serving in Korea.

You will recall that some time ago the Legion offered its services in whatever capacity they might be used in support of the part Canada is playing in the Korean war. Also you are aware that we have for some time been supplying reading material and stationery to the troops in Korea and are now prepared to extend this service to members of the 27th brigade, who we understand will shortly be going to Europe.

Letters we are receiving from members of the forces in Korea and items appearing in the various newspapers indicate that earnest consideration should now be given to the possibility of providing more adequate welfare facilities to the troops.

Our dominion executive council will meet here on November 8-9-10 next and the dominion president will arrive in Ottawa on the morning of the 5th of November. The dominion president together with representatives of both Canadian Legion educational services and Canadian Legion war services would like, if possible, to see you at that time . . .

The rest of the letter is immaterial. The Minister of National Defence replied on November 1 as follows:

Dear Mr. Anderson: —

I am leaving out the introductory words.

Thank you for your letter of October 30 about welfare and recreational services in Korea.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

In this connection I enclose a copy of a statement made in the house last Monday.

I would emphasize that—

He emphasizes five points, and they are as follows:

1. None of the countries operating in the theatre employ agencies outside the services.

2. Conditions are utterly different from those that obtained in western Europe in the first or second world wars.

3. We have had no complaints or suggestions for additional services from the brigade commander, whose record shows that he would be the first to see that everything possible was done for the troops under his command.

4. The theatre has been repeatedly visited by numbers of officers, including Brigadier Fleury, Brigadier Bernatchez, Brigadier Brennan and many others. They report that everything possible is being done.

5. Because of the conditions in Korea, we are providing for service on a rotational basis in so far as the military situation permits. If you believe that additional steps can and should be taken, I would be only too glad to receive suggestions. I believe what we want more than anything else is for the people in Canada by their letters to keep in touch with the men who are serving us abroad.

He goes on to say that they will provide for discussion with the council of the Legion. That, sir, indicates why, for a period of approximately fourteen months, the Canadian Legion's offer of service has not received the consideration one would have expected it would receive from the minister. For a period of fourteen months apparently there was no correspondence other than the offer and the reply of the minister.

Turning to the Knights of Columbus, they made their offer of service on August 2, 1950, in a letter signed by the president, Canadian Army Huts, Knights of Columbus, and by the secretary of the same organization. The letter is from Montreal, and reads as follows:

As you are aware, the Knights of Columbus Canadian Army Huts was one of the four national organizations who were recognized by the government of Canada to provide auxiliary services for the Canadian armed forces . . .

Then it goes on to say:

... we wish to place ourselves on record that if the occasion arises, we feel that we should be recognized as we were in world war II.

Let me assure you that if such occasion arises, the Knights of Columbus Canadian Army Huts, representing the Catholic population of Canada, as loyal Canadian citizens, will be only too anxious to serve the armed forces of Canada to the best of our ability.

They, too, received a reply from the minister the pertinent part of which reads:

I do appreciate your courtesy in sending me this information and it is a source of gratification to know that we may call upon you if the need arises.

Then, the Y.M.C.A. made its offer on November 10, 1950, through the national council