

Mr. COLDWELL: The minister will recall that the letter stated that he was not getting tradesman's pay either.

Mr. RALSTON: I am quite free to admit that there has been great difficulty in the service with regard to tradesmen's pay. There are certain tradesmen's positions in the establishments of the various units and those who occupy these positions get tradesmen's pay. The rule has been that they do not get tradesmen's pay until they are filling tradesmen's positions.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Has not the trouble been that the men were induced to enlist in the belief that they were going into a trade? Perhaps they were promised by the enlisting officer that they would get tradesmen's pay, and then when they got in there there was no job. I have had cases of that kind.

Mr. RALSTON: I am bound to say that the recruiting officers and the literature with regard to recruiting have emphasized the matter of tradesmen's occupations and trades opportunities. But we have now put into effect a system with regard to tradesmen's pay which I think will cover the situation. As a matter of fact this was effective April 1. A man will be entitled to tradesmen's pay on the completion of his basic training, subject to the provisions of the next three subsections. He must be filling a vacancy in the appropriate rank and trade in the war establishment of his unit. If, while in receipt of tradesmen's rates, he is promoted and thereby ceases to occupy a tradesmen's vacancy, he may continue to draw such tradesmen's rates until he is promoted to a higher rank that will entitle him to a regimental rate equal to or higher than the tradesmen's rates of which he was in receipt prior to such promotion. The next provision is that he shall be entitled to tradesmen's rates while absent from his normal duties on leave, on a course of instruction, or because of sickness caused by wounds or injuries. When he is qualified to draw tradesmen's rates, he may draw such rates while being held as an unposted reinforcement within quotas to be determined under the authority of the adjutant-general. That last provision is important. In other words, the adjutant-general may prescribe the percentage it may be.

I hesitate to name the percentage, but it may be a percentage 25 or 50 per cent above the establishment to the extent of which men who are qualified as tradesmen may receive tradesmen's pay notwithstanding that they are in excess of the establishment. That provision has been the subject of a great

[Mr. Ralston.]

deal of examination by various branches of the department, each one of which has tradesmen. We heard the member for New Westminster the other night asking that bandsmen be given tradesmen's pay. There are also cooks and clerks frequently getting tradesmen's pay. The list is almost unlimited. I sometimes think that the infantry soldier who is learning the rifle, the two-inch mortar, the Bren gun, the machine gun, the tommy gun, and some of those who drive carriers are probably just about as highly skilled tradesmen as any of them.

With regard to the case itself, I suppose it is old now, but may I ask my hon. friend how long ago the letter was written?

Mr. COLDWELL: On April 27.

Mr. RALSTON: I should like very much to get the name.

Mr. COLDWELL: I shall be very glad to give it to the minister.

Mr. RALSTON: I shall certainly have it looked into.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Would the minister make a statement about the Canadian Women's Army Corps?

Mr. RALSTON: Yes. The present strength of the corps is between 2,200 and 2,300. Recruitment is going on satisfactorily. The age limits are eighteen to forty-five. The educational qualifications are grade eight or higher. The service is general service—that is, service anywhere. The young ladies are called privates, sergeants or corporals, just as in the army. Speaking of them in the mass, the volunteers are used particularly in the four general subdivisions, two of which were mentioned by my hon. friend. When I mention dietetics, I mean cooking; I mean as dietitians, waitresses and everything else that has to do with the production of food in the camps or training centres or other establishments wherever they may be. That is one general class. The second general class is clerical—stenographic work, secretarial, accountancy, and so on. The third general class is in the auxiliary services, in canteens and places of the kind, where a large number of them can be employed. The fourth general class is in connection with motor vehicles, mechanized transport and classifications of the kind.

I have been very much impressed with the work which the corps has already done. The numbers are not large. We felt that to give proper training we should have a central training school. We have had training in the districts where the original volunteers were taken on, but we felt there should be