

portation on embarkation leave. In Great Britain there is free transportation for Canadian soldiers on their privilege leaves, to wherever in the United Kingdom the soldier wishes to go. I think it is an excellent provision, in that it gives great numbers of troops overseas an opportunity of seeing Scotland and other parts of England which otherwise they would not be able to visit. I assume, in fact, I am sure, that the Canadian government pays the fares. I wish to recommend that on a privilege leave as well as on embarkation leave—the annual furlough in the army overseas is called privilege leave—free transportation leave—free transportation should be given. I know that a step in the right direction has been made in the form of a substantial reduction in the fares, but I believe the authorities would find it advantageous, simply as a matter of morale, if the trip were made free.

Apropos of service on trains, I have travelled during this war on a number of trains, including troop trains, both to and from the embarkation port, and I have found that they, the troop trains are extremely well organized and run. Certainly, with regard to none of these trains upon which I have travelled could any justifiable complaint be made as to the coaches, the organization of the railways, the feeding arrangements or anything else. But that was definitely on embarkation trains.

There is just one other small point. It has been found that a number of soldiers returning from overseas land on this side without any money in their pockets. They are given a grant, or pay, or an advance on pay of two pounds sterling just before they leave the non-effective transport depot, or at the time they are there.

Mr. LaFLECHE: Crown and anchor!

Mr. ADAMSON: What happened is this, the two pounds very soon finds itself translated into beer or into—

Mr. POWER: —a poker game.

Mr. ADAMSON: Yes, through a regrettable inability to hold the better hands at cards, or some other common mishap. At any rate, by the time the soldier arrives on this side he has no money. I suggest that the grant be still given; but instead of two pounds give him ten dollars, Canadian currency, which he cannot spend in England, so that when he arrives in Montreal or wherever he does arrive, he will have some cash.

[Mr. Adamson.]

Mr. POWER: What will he do on the boat? Can't you play poker with Canadian money?

Mr. ADAMSON: Well, it is a little more difficult. The same facilities and space are not present, and there is little or no beer.

Mrs. CASSELMAN: I think Alberta has a special interest in this matter of transportation, because we feel that we are in the centre of things, and our men, particularly sailors, are frequently transferred from one coast to another. The railway fares from either coast to points in Alberta are very high. I wonder, if it is impossible to give free transportation, whether a ceiling could not be put on railway fares, so that, where a man's railway fare is above a certain amount, the authorities would step in and assist him by paying some part of it. That, I think, would help to overcome the difficulties of embarkation leaves for our Alberta men.

Mr. RALSTON: I think I had better speak first of the toughest proposition, namely, the suggestion which has been supported by all speakers this afternoon with regard to free transportation. I certainly wish that I could gratify my own personal inclination to make the situation just as favourable as possible in this respect.

I am not in a position to give the committee any assurance in this connection just at present. Two years ago we got this arrangement with the railways which we thought was a substantial concession. We thought it would be of real assistance to the soldiers and it has worked very well. I realize that distances are long and that even a one-third fare on a return trip is a considerable tax on a soldier's purse. But, although it may not be very striking in any one item the committee will recall that there has been a very large addition to this item due to increases made this year in connection with soldiers' pay, dependents' allowance and subsistence allowance. As a matter of fact there is between \$45,000,000 and \$50,000,000 of an increase in this year's appropriation, due entirely to the changes which were recently made in pay, dependents' allowance and subsistence allowance.

I cannot give the committee any assurance at the present time with regard to free transportation for embarkation leave and furlough. There have been two alternatives or two lesser measures suggested. One is free transportation on embarkation leave and the other suggestion, made by the hon. member for Edmon-