

## War Appropriation—Army

I have in mind another candidate for the provincial legislature of Saskatchewan who is stationed on the Pacific coast and who wrote me wanting information just exactly along the same lines. As he understands it, he must make application to his commanding officer. If the commanding officer does not feel that he can release him, or if the application lies around, or has to go to military district headquarters and then to national defence headquarters, there will not be many of the twenty-three days left by the time he gets to his rural constituency, and a very large rural constituency at that. I think the minister ought to make very clear what the exact *modus operandi* is to be. Will the man make application to his commanding officer; will it go straight to national defence headquarters, and can it be dealt with immediately? Or, will the political party concerned make application on behalf of the man as soon as writs are issued? It would be preferable, I think, that each political party should notify national defence headquarters of the men who are candidates, and national defence headquarters would decide whether these men could be released and arrange the releases right away. Otherwise, as the minister knows, considerable delay could occur between the time a man makes application to his officer commanding, with all the channels and red tape through which it may have to go, before he is finally released.

I think the minister ought also to clarify the position of a man seeking election as a candidate. That raises the question whether or not he can speak on the radio. When he speaks on the radio, not only the people in his own constituency hear him but the people within the entire area covered by that particular radio station may hear him. Does that preclude him from speaking on the radio? I think the minister ought to make that very clear, because that question will come up, and it is better to clarify it now than to wait until some situation arises when the minister or anybody else may be accused of partisanship or of showing favour to one candidate as against the other.

Early in the discussion of the minister's estimates I raised the question of the regulation which forbade men in the armed services writing to the newspapers, and pointed out to the minister the case of a member of the legislature of the province from which I come being forbidden to address a forum. The minister said that the regulation was under consideration with a view to modifying it. I wonder whether sometime before this discussion closes the minister could let us know if the department in the past two weeks have agreed as to what the regulation will be.

[Mr. T. C. Douglas.]

I also asked the minister earlier in this discussion if he could give us information with regard to the various camps across Canada and the various military districts and set out the number of men in the A. and T. staffs as against the number of men who are being trained as students or recruits, because I am even more disturbed about the matter now than when I rose to discuss it a couple of weeks ago. Wherever I have gone; wherever I have met men from various parts of Canada in the armed services, they kept stressing to me the fact that so many of them, as they claim, are sitting around without enough work to do, that they are in some cases overstaffed, that there seems to be a tremendously large home war establishment, out of all proportion to the number of recruits to be trained and the amount of work to be done. I do not think the solution is to do what I heard was suggested in one place. They telephoned one office and said, "You will cut your staff twenty-five per cent." Later on it did not materialize, but that was the order. I do not think you can do it in that way. There may be some places where the staff is not twenty-five per cent too large; there may be others where it is half as large again as is needed. I believe the paring-knife should be used—if my information is not entirely incorrect—on this very large home war establishment which was built up at a time when many more recruits were being trained than there are at the present time.

I asked the minister some time ago—he may have answered it, and if he did I will not pursue the matter further—with reference to the question of venereal disease. I was very glad to hear the minister say that the Wassermann test is now being made compulsory. I ask the minister if his department would give some consideration to the matter of periodic Wassermann tests. It seems to me that the danger of a man becoming infected is as great or greater after he is in the services than before, and that it would not be a difficult or cumbersome job to have a Wassermann test taken once every six months, or once every year, for the protection of the men; it is merely a matter of lining them up and taking a little blood out of each man's arm. If these tests were made I think the proceeding would pay for itself in the protection which these men would have in the years that lie ahead.

Would the minister give the committee some information regarding the dependents' allowance board and the other item, the dependents' supplementary grants fund? I take it for granted, with regard to these last two