

but the people on the farms do not think so. They think one man must have more influence than the other.

Mr. RALSTON: It must be the government.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): Yes. I wish the minister would make a clarifying statement with regard to applications for leave. If the commanding officers clearly understand that provision has been made that the application must be forwarded immediately to the war services board, individual cases will, I believe, be dealt with. Could the minister make such a clarifying statement either to the committee or to the commanding officers across the country?

Mr. CHURCH: If Hitler comes he will give us all leave to be slaves.

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend is under a misapprehension when he speaks of a provision having been made. The only provision which has been made is the provision that when an application is made for compassionate leave—not for seeding, but for leave under special circumstances—the commanding officer makes a recommendation, whatever it may be, and passes it on to the district officer commanding, who sends it to the board, and when the board makes a recommendation the regulations require that that recommendation shall be accepted, unless the exigencies of the service are such as to make it inadvisable to do so. But that is not leave for seeding. That is where the misapprehension arises. I tried to make it clear the other night that the army cannot spare a man for seeding, any more than can the air force or the navy, and that we should not be asked to take on two jobs. These units are being mobilized as rapidly as they can be; there is urgent need for them, particularly in some parts of the country, and we feel that we cannot agree to any policy which means the wholesale release of men who are in the middle of training to go back for seeding.

If there are individual cases of hardship, cases in which compassionate leave should be granted and which the boards think are proper cases, they are considered by the board. When my hon. friend says the commanding officer knew of no such provision, I think he must mean that the commanding officer knew of no such provision for granting leave for seeding, because I think all commanding officers know that we have delegated to the boards under the Department of National War Services the discretion in connection with proper cases of application for compassionate leave. That is probably not very satisfying to my hon. friends, and

particularly to those who are writing and who apparently have the idea that there is actual provision for leave for seeding, but that is only in connection with depots and some home guard establishments, and I do not think it applies to any of the units to which my hon. friend refers, or to the training centres.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): They apply particularly to young men in training under the National Resources Mobilization Act, a great many of whom have been in for but a short time. When I say "provision for seeding" I must not be misunderstood. I am aware that no general provision was made to allow any soldier to go home for seeding, but I think there was some provision that if a man could show that he was absolutely required at home and that those at home could not carry on the spring operations without him, some consideration would be given.

Mr. RALSTON: I do not think those considerations were mentioned. It was purely a procedural order in council that was passed. The idea was to get away from the idea that the army made the full decision; that is, to give people opportunity to make a special case under special circumstances, but I do not think it had reference to seeding or putting in a crop or agricultural operations alone. I think it had reference to compassionate leave.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Along the same line, in case of applications for postponement coming before the commanding officer, does the decision whether or not a case shall be presented to the war services board rest entirely in the discretion of the commanding officer, or is he obliged to present it to the board?

Mr. RALSTON: He sends it with his recommendation, which may be that it be not granted, but he should send it forward to be decided by the board. Often I can conceive of cases in which the board has facilities for making inquiry very much superior to those which the commanding officer has, and it is very much more accustomed to hearing applications of this kind. I can understand one commanding officer may be pretty lenient and another pretty stiff in matters of this kind.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): I am sorry that committees are sitting to-night at the same time as this session, but the minister was kind enough to suggest before the dinner