

very well indeed. We should try to utilize the services of these men in the interests of the country, and not be swayed by prejudices and intolerance. I know that some of the members of the boards investigating these cases, whatever their qualifications may be in other walks of life, certainly have not the proper qualifications to consider the cases of persons who are conscientious objectors. I believe the minister, in so far as he is able, will give the matter his attention. I support most heartily the point raised by the hon. member for Calgary West.

Mr. STIRLING: Are these conscientious objectors not now being used on useful work within the parks?

Mr. MacINNIS: To-day work within parks is not necessarily useful work, when the agricultural districts are requiring men, and when we are taking men out of the shipyards, and from many other kinds of work, to put them on the farms. To keep men in the parks filling up holes, then digging the holes again, and then filling them up is not making a proper use of man-power.

Mr. STIRLING: The hon. member disagrees with the kind of work in which they are engaged?

Mr. MacINNIS: Yes, at this particular time.

Mr. ADAMSON: I was glad to hear what the minister said respecting the possible utilization of persons—even in the armed forces—despite their being enemy aliens. As the minister may be aware, I have repeatedly disagreed with the policy of the government, and particularly that of the Department of National Defence, which operated on the premise that because a man was an alien, even though he might be naturalized after a certain period, there was no possibility of his being used in the armed forces.

I was instrumental in getting into the army one young man whose father was a German. He did extremely well, and was recommended for a commission. It was discovered eventually that he was of German parentage, and an attempt was made to have him discharged from the army. I am prepared to believe that that young man, as well as many others, was as loyal a Canadian as any hon. member in the house. The fact that a father happened to be born in Germany is no reason for damning a second or third generation.

I emphasize the point that after due investigation has been made—and we cannot be too careful—these people should be accepted. The simple basis of nationality is a false premise. It is wrong and even undemocratic to prevent a young man from fighting for his

[Mr. MacInnis.]

adopted country, if he chooses to do so. A number have wished so to do, but as a result of the present regulations they have been prevented.

Elsewhere I have seen men whom I have known to be Germans, working in the imperial forces, and performing extremely valuable and confidential tasks. I was delighted to hear the minister's statement to-night, and I hope he will see to its enforcement in the department.

The forgotten man in the armed forces to-day is the man engaged in internment operations. I was glad to hear the hon. member for Fort William mention the veterans guard as being among those in charge of internment operations. There is no job in Canada as trying, as exasperating or as objectionable as looking after prisoners. And of all the prisoners the Germans are the most objectionable. Looking after them is a thankless and miserable job. The only thing that can happen to an internment guard is that he collects abuse, in the event of an escape. A hue and cry goes up, followed by a court of inquiry and occasionally a court-martial.

There have been escapes, and probably there will be more of them. We cannot help having some, when we are dealing with as large a number of interned prisoners as are now interned in Canada.

I think the minister should emphasize the fact that there have been very few escapes in Canada, whereas on the other hand, in respect of our fellows, I will not mention any number, but will say that at times there are hundreds of members of the British armed forces loose in enemy territory. I mention that only by way of comparison with our effort. I believe we have lost only one man. Von Werra secured a boat, crossed the St. Lawrence river and got back to Germany.

Mr. RALSTON: And even he was not lost from a camp.

Mr. ADAMSON: No; he was lost from a train, and was subsequently killed on the Russian front. It cost the German government \$25,000 for Von Werra to break his parole. He is the only one who got back to Germany. On the other hand, we read stories as to the numbers who have escaped, after being taken prisoners at the Dieppe and other operations.

The veterans' guard has to put up with the abuse of these sullen prisoners. A particularly objectionable feature was the unfortunate practice of manacled prisoners. This is the unfortunate and unhappy job he has to