

*War Appropriation—Army*

teau Laurier you will find a very good cook there, the chef, who looks after all the cooking for the establishment, but there are others who have not the skill that he has.

Here is another case, H.Q. 869-B-3452. This fellow had had pleurisy each year for three years previously, and he was transferred from Rimouski to Chicoutimi and kept in the "clink" as a deserter because his health was such that he could not leave his home and go to the camp. I could mention many others. Here is another young fellow on leave at home. He suffered from appendicitis and had an operation, and after fifteen days he had to report to Rimouski; otherwise he would have been considered a deserter. He went there in the dead of winter with the result that he caught cold and nearly died, not from appendicitis but from pleurisy contracted on the way down. I have his file here and I will pass over the full file to the minister. I would ask the minister to look through that file and return it to me afterwards because I should like to use it in connection with the estimates of national selective service.

I do not wish to take up much more of the time of the committee, and therefore I take the minister into my confidence and pass him my own file, as I am prepared to do with all the others. These boys are not afraid to enlist. Here is a young man who was found unfit, E-41997. What did he do? He enlisted again until it was discovered that he was too unhealthy to remain in the army. There is another case that is simply incredible. I will not mention it now, but I will give the minister a copy of the letter I wrote to the deputy minister. The doctor said in this case that they were not afraid of Jean François Pouliot and that the man would stay in the army.

I am ready to cooperate with the minister to the fullest extent, but I want to see these men dealt with fairly by the authorities. I am not raising any prejudice, racial or religious. The doctors I complain of are French Canadians in these camps. They are not all of the type mentioned. In the province of Quebec there are French-Canadian doctors for whom I have the greatest respect, but I do not want to see people who are kind to me looked after by blacksmiths when they are sick. At times the doctors actually forget to examine a man's heart. One man could not do anything without perspiring freely. He was weak and very delicate and I sent him to a doctor. I wanted him to pass the medical examination, and I trusted the army doctors enough to have him sent to the army for examination. The result was that he was declared unfit. I will give the

[Mr. Pouliot.]

numbers of some of these cases: H.Q. 869-B-3452; H.Q. 869-O-1367; H.Q. 869-L-1261; H.Q. 869-C-2833; H.Q. 869-M-3011; H.Q. 869-P-1799; 83-802; F3818; E-41997; H.Q. 869-O-406.

I am putting these cases on *Hansard*, and afterwards I should like the minister to look through the files. I know he will see that what I have said is borne out by the facts. I quite understand that the minister cannot see everything that goes on in the department, and it is precisely for that reason that he has a parliamentary assistant. If, therefore, the minister is too busy with the other business of his department, I would be delighted to take the matter up with his parliamentary assistant and discuss these various cases of young men who are indispensable on the farm but who are kept in the army.

What I complain of is that the idea seems to be that every man counts as one, even if he is sick. But surely a sick man does not count; he is not an asset but a liability. Some commanding officers will not allow any man to leave the regiment. They seem to regard it as a reflection on the army to have a sick man leave, because it would mean one man less. What a shame. So that they retain sick men and have them wash floors notwithstanding that they are suffering from pulmonary diseases. They force them to drill when they should be in category E. It is absurd. That is where we need reform.

I thank hon. members for their patience in listening to me. They know quite well that I am acquainted with the facts and that if they were in my position they would do the same. What I am doing for the boys from *Témiscouata* and from other counties who write to me I would do for all the boys who are in the army. I can assure the committee that what is done with reference to these cases that I have submitted to the minister will have their repercussion throughout the army and doctors will be more careful. I can tell the minister also that nothing is worse, from the point of view of the ill-treatment of these fellows, than the protection which is accorded to some. My remarks do not apply to all the doctors. If what I said yesterday were imputed to all it would be unfair because that is not my belief. I have a high regard for several of the doctors whom I consider real savants, scientists. But, I repeat, reform is urgently needed, and I could give the minister letters that I have received from these young men thanking me for what I have done for them. In some instances they were ready to work in depots. They were willing to serve in positions where they would not have to walk, and so on, because they were unable to