

Canadian Forces Act

I did not agree with the benevolent fund at all. I said it presupposed unemployment and charity. There is no reason why servicemen should be overcharged in canteens, because the profits that accumulate in a canteen and are later placed in a fund are overcharges.

Mr. Harkness: Don't forget the swill account.

Mr. Gillis: Yes; you got a little of that. Not much of that—

Mr. Ferrie: It sounds as if somebody has had something to do with it.

Mr. Gillis: Not very much of that is placed in the fund. The officers generally gather that all up for their mess. I never approved of the benevolent fund to start with. The navy did not approve of it; at least their representatives before the committee did not. Nevertheless it was set up. In my opinion the overcharge that accumulated and is now in the fund should be used for the purpose for which it was intended, namely, for service personnel and their dependents who are in difficulties. It is earmarked for that purpose. The recreational facilities that the troops in Korea are entitled to are the responsibility of this country, and the cost should be borne by the people of this country.

There is not much we can do with the bill now, but I would suggest to the parliamentary assistant who is in the house listening attentively, as he always does, that he pay attention to the discussion this afternoon, and if this bill does not cover what we are asking for this afternoon that he bring in another bill to provide the necessary services for the troops in Korea. I am sure that later on the 27th brigade will be demanding the same thing. Provide some place where they can go that has a Canadian sign hanging outside, Canadian goods and Canadian cigarettes available to the boys, with Canadian personnel trained in the field of recreation so that these men can get advice and guidance when needed. These men are entitled to that kind of a little bit of home in so far as it is possible in the countries where they are making great sacrifices.

I listened with interest to the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) describe the cigarette that is being served to the troops in Korea. I thought we had got over that. I hope that the soldier in Korea, or any soldier in any part of the world in the future, representing this country, will not be compelled to smoke the kind of cigarettes we smoked in the first war. Apparently the leader of the opposition who smoked them in the first war has had a package sent to him. He would know what they are. It is an atrocity. It was not so bad

with us. We did not know the difference. The standards of smoking were very low at that time. We smoked Macdonald's twist in an old pipe, and that kind of thing. I think the tobacco was manufactured in Prince Edward Island. They have got away from that and have gone into potatoes instead of tobacco. In this day and age when there is so much good tobacco available and it so easy to get cigarettes, there is no reason why we should inflict that punishment on our troops in any part of the world. I believe that particular item calls for an immediate order in council. If upon an examination of the evidence the Department of National Defence finds that our troops in Korea are being compelled to smoke the type of cigarette described by the leader of the opposition, I believe the department would be justified in assuming it is a secret weapon put out by the enemy for the purpose of breaking the morale of our troops. An immediate order in council should be passed prohibiting any of our troops in any section of the world from smoking that kind of cigarette, and the penalty should be immediate court-martial.

I have made these few remarks merely for the purpose of provoking further thought on the part of the parliamentary assistant to the minister. I was rather disappointed to read in the press that the minister is in Europe now. I would like to have seen him take the position that this controversy about Korea is not doing us any good. At the behest of some sections of the forces, some people have been sent there to see what is happening along recreational lines. The situation is still not clear. I would have thought the minister would go there and see the situation himself. Perhaps he does not have to go there because the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Mayhew) is there, and has been under fire. Perhaps when he comes back some immediate action will be taken by the department to take this discussion out of the realm of the press. It is not reflecting any credit on us, and it is not doing any good for the morale of our troops.

Mr. Ray Thomas (Wetaskiwin): I do not believe I can add a great deal to what has been said this afternoon, except to say that I agree one hundred per cent with all those who have spoken so far. From my experience during the last war, I know that during the periods when we had very little to do we found the service canteens a wonderful place to go. If we desired we could have a little coffee and sandwiches, or sit around and read. Educational and recreational facilities were there. While in the canteen we could do pretty much as we pleased. During the last war, and I believe during the first war, these