

*War Appropriation*

in some of these districts would not be filled if the age limitation were not broadened to some extent. But there has been what is, I think, a legitimate complaint on the part of a number of men in the age groups from twenty-seven to thirty years who have been married since July, 1940, and who are now raising young families, but who for military purposes are not regarded as married, that they should be called from a particular district when young unmarried men of the same ages in other districts are not called. That, I think, is a reasonable complaint. I have had a large number of protestations in that particular regard.

Another matter, entirely different, on which I wish to say a few words has to do with the medical services of the armed forces. This afternoon, when the hon. member for Parkdale was speaking, he had something to say with reference to the rehabilitation of men in the armed services who suffered from certain disabilities. He made particular reference to those who suffered from hernia, and he gave it as his personal opinion that such men could not be rehabilitated, or at least that they were not being rehabilitated, and that if they were going to be operated on, it would be necessary for them to have expert surgical intervention. If I understood the minister correctly, he stated that that was the opinion of the medical staff. Am I right?

Mr. RALSTON: I believe the Minister of Pensions and National Health said that. I do not think I did.

Mr. McCANN: I must take exception to his statement. I do not concur in that opinion.

Mr. RALSTON: I think the only intervention I made in that connection was to ask the hon. member's opinion with regard to double hernia, whether that could be cured. I do not think I expressed that opinion on behalf of the officers of the department.

Mr. McCANN: That observation with reference to double hernia was made, if my memory serves me aright, subsequently to the other observation. I say that I do not concur in that opinion, and while the hon. member for Parkdale is generally regarded as having been one of Canada's best surgeons, and he made a report on the war services for the war of 1914-18, I feel that he does not express the modern opinion of the medical and surgical fraternity in Canada when he makes a statement to that effect. There is no country in the world that has higher standards of medical services and medical education than we have in Canada. That is pretty generally accepted, and the proof of that is that of our hospitals,

[Mr. McCann.]

whether they be large institutions or the smaller ones in the smaller industrial communities, a great number have been given the approval of the American hospital association. That is perhaps the last word of commendation there is on this continent.

I want to revert to what I was speaking about with reference to what the hon. member for Parkdale said, having to do with operations for hernia. Every day from one end of this country to the other that operation is being performed by thousands of young Canadian surgeons who are rehabilitating men back into our industrial and agricultural life. That is proof that it can be done equally well by the medical services in our armed forces, because the medical services in the forces are exactly the same men, with very few exceptions, who had been in civil practice prior to the war. Having said something to the effect that our standard of proficiency, both in our institutions and as regards our medical and surgical men, ranks with the highest in any country in the world, it appears to me that when that service is translated into the armed forces, whether that be in the army, the navy or the air force, we have a let-down. There is a drop in that standard and those very same men who have been in civilian life practising are spoken of disparagingly and are as not as well regarded as they were in civil practice.

We have three medical services, one for the armed forces, one for the navy and one for the air force. I am of opinion that the three services are not necessary. There is duplication of service; there is duplication of expense in connection with hospitalization. However, I am not going to labour that point. That, as a matter of policy, has been established and this would be the wrong time to change it. I did make suggestions along that line at the beginning of the war and they were not accepted. The three services have now been established and I am of opinion that perhaps it would be a serious interruption in our medical services if the policy were changed at this time. Not only is it expensive from the point of view of dollars and cents, but it is a very expensive service from the point of view of our man-power. Already to date about 2,000 medical men have been taken from the civilian services and put into the armed forces, all of them on a voluntary basis, men who rank among the very highest in the medical profession in Canada. Within the last few days a call has gone out from the medical staff asking for another 600 men. I am sure there will be a call very soon, if our forces are to be augmented, for more medical men for the navy and the air force. It is estimated that