

I should like to ask the minister some questions about our women's army. I have an article which appeared in the *Star*, written by Austin Cross, which reads:

"The object of the C.W.A.C." said Major-General Letson, "is to replace every able-bodied man in category A with a woman, and thus far, we have succeeded in doing this with 1,900 women. We aim to let a woman take a man's place wherever we can, and by so doing, conserve the man-power resources of Canada."

Early in the interview, the general emphasized the fact that women were available for service anywhere, and already a detachment of eleven was at the Canadian legation in Washington.

I have another article dated May 1 which appeared in the *Daily Province*, written by Torchy Anderson, which reads:

Possibility that Canadian women who enlist in the rapidly-growing Canadian women's army corps, may emulate their British sisters manning mixed batteries for anti-aircraft defence, was admitted officially this morning.

In the discussion of the corps, Major-General H. F. G. Letson, M.C., adjutant-general, said that it is quite possible that volunteers of the corps may be trained in anti-aircraft work.

The minister made some reference to this corps in the house some time ago, as reported on page 1913 of *Hansard* of this year. He referred to the dietetic service, which included cooking and waiting on tables, and certain clerical work. I think many hon. members are in the same position as I. I have received many communications from young women in all parts of the country and of various educational standards inquiring as to what branch of the service they could enlist in. Could the minister not enlarge on his previous statement and give us something concrete as to what he expects this women's army to be able to undertake? Perhaps he could tell us also the minimum and maximum ages which will govern their being taken into the service, what educational standards will be required, and what type of work they can usefully perform in order to relieve fit men for service.

Mr. RALSTON: The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar made a statement about public health matters and quite properly suggested that the army were interested, the navy, the air force, munitions and supply and the public generally. I gathered that he was including these departments as part of the public and not as service departments. I shall not take up the time of the committee to deal with this because I do not profess to be able to do so in any detail. I shall bring the matter to the attention of the government. I do not think my hon. friend was quite fair in his reference to what has been done in Canada. I am talking not about the government but about the Canadian public

generally and what it has done in the matter of public health and various types of social legislation. I do not think we lag behind a great deal in this respect. The hon. member referred to Stoke-on-Trent where there was a local organization. Canada is a federation and matters of health are under the provinces as well as the dominion; there is a division of jurisdiction. I think the last few years have seen a remarkable degree, not only of coordination—that word is pretty well worn out—but of cooperation.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): And improvement.

Mr. RALSTON: As well as improvement in this matter of public health. There are measures in force to-day in the provinces and the dominion that would never have been thought of ten years ago. I do not mean that we are by any means satisfied, but I would not want it to go out to the country that we are altogether lagging behind in the matter of public health.

Mr. COLDWELL: I think the minister must have missed my point. It was that the federal government should assume some responsibility for the financing of these things.

Mr. RALSTON: Of course the federal government has assumed considerable responsibility in that respect. In reference to the case which my hon. friend cited as outlined in the letter he read from the wife of a soldier, he was simply pointing out the argument that has been made a number of times during this debate, that dependents' allowances are not sufficient. At the risk of repetition I would indicate that that is exactly the sort of case that I have had in mind. I believe this particular case has been brought up before.

Mr. COLDWELL: I do not think so.

Mr. RALSTON: It sounded familiar to me. It is exactly the sort of case that the Minister of Finance was endeavouring to deal with in his announcement last November. If the dependents' board of trustees, in whom I have considerable confidence and who have certainly been taking an interest in their work by adopting the method, not of going through departmental officials but of going through citizens who know the cases intimately in their communities, does not work out, the system will have to be changed.

With regard to the army part of it, my hon. friend mentioned the fact that this man was a soldier without pay. I can only think of the situation being that he must have been a tradesman, receiving more pay as a tradesman than he would have received as a sergeant.