

mittees are set up across the country, and what machinery is provided to make contact with these committees? In Nova Scotia there is only one committee functioning under the dependents' board of trustees. That committee sits in Halifax and there is no one in the province that I know of, apart from a few social service workers, who has any idea to whom to appeal under a given set of circumstances. If this body is to function efficiently there should be at least a representative of it in all the large centres.

Another thing. The secretaries of the veterans' organizations in their respective towns and communities could very well be utilized in making the necessary investigation where an application is made for a grant under the dependents' board of trustees. They are familiar with the line of work and are well known in the communities, and they can be depended upon to make a fair recommendation. If this particular grant serves any purpose at all, there is one class of people that should be brought under it, and that is the women in Canada with families whose husbands go absent without leave, either in this country or overseas. Regulations have been extended to cover the matter up to a certain point. While a man is under apprehension the allowance is carried on for three months, but there are a large number of women in Canada who have been faced with the necessity of having their allowance discontinued. This particular class does not come under the dependents' board of trustees, because I understand that the object is simply to augment the allowance where there are extenuating circumstances, and when the allowance is not applicable the dependent will not be brought under the board of trustees. I should be pleased if the minister could make a statement as to the machinery and what the possibilities are of utilizing the secretaries of the veterans' organizations throughout Canada, in their respective communities, to carry out investigations. If an application is made from Sydney, someone has to come from Halifax to look into the situation and weeks are lost in investigation; whereas, if the veterans' branch secretaries were utilized, a telegram or a telephone call would clear the matter up in twenty-four hours.

Mr. RALSTON: I have endeavoured to put on the record the general outline of the organization. I did so early in the discussion, but on this occasion I may repeat that the dependents' board of trustees itself consists of nine persons selected across Canada who, I think, are fairly representative and form a cross-section of those who take an interest in

the welfare of dependents. The Canadian Legion is represented, the Department of Pensions and National Health is represented, there are French-speaking and English-speaking representatives on the board, and so on, and there has been no complaint of any kind with regard to the constitution of the board itself. The board functions through committees in different centres. I have here a list of the centres in which the committees in each province are located: Charlottetown; Saint John; Moncton; Halifax; Quebec; Montreal; Kingston; Ottawa; Toronto; Hamilton; Peterborough; London; Windsor; Sudbury; Port Arthur; Winnipeg; Regina; Saskatoon; Calgary; Edmonton; Vancouver; Victoria. Each committee covers a specific territory. In some cases it is the province, in some cases the military district and in some cases a smaller area. The membership of the committee is not confined to residents of the city in which the office is located, but wherever it is appropriate it includes members from outside points.

My hon. friend, I believe, is interested in the procedure which is followed and the opportunity which a particular dependent has for making application and having that application considered. As I understand it, the procedure is this. In the first place a notice has been sent to every person receiving dependents' allowance in Canada advising of the existence of the dependents' board of trustees and, as well, of the location of the offices of the board, and advising further as to the procedure which they shall adopt should a situation arise in which they feel that the services of the board can be of benefit. In addition to that the Canadian Legion and the welfare agencies in each province and in every community know of the operations of the dependents' board of trustees and are prepared to help to forward the applications and the investigation of any case, with a statement of the circumstances. I noted my hon. friend's suggestion with regard to investigations. Naturally—and I think he will agree with me—one does not want to multiply the number of investigating agencies. There is nothing worse than that from the point of view of morale, because it might easily give a wrong impression to a prospective recipient as to the attitude of those who are dealing with his or her case. Emphasis is put on the fact that these agencies, whatever they are, are not for the purpose of doling out charity, but to help applicants to show their right to assistance under the regulations which the board administers. I have reason to feel that there has been a general measure of approval of the method and general acceptance of the fact that the board is sincerely trying not to chisel on dependents, but, on the contrary, is endeavouring to