

than anyone else, is denied this privilege. Drive on any highway in this province and you will see that hundreds and hundreds of men are obliged to thumb a ride home. A private soldier receives for a thirty-day month \$39. If he is married he is obliged to assign \$20 to his wife. That leaves him \$19 a month for cigarettes, canteen, haircuts, soap and other small articles, and the dozens of other articles on which a soldier has to spend money. Thus, when the time comes for leave, the soldier is not in a financial position to pay his transportation home. At Camp Borden there are many soldiers from the Belleville and Kingston district, and as far east as Brockville. At Petawawa are many soldiers from areas a long distance away. These men are unable to pay transportation home even though they receive at the present time a round trip for the price of a single ticket. What is the result? You find the number of men absent without leave is increasing all the time. You find that discipline is suffering. But the worst feature is the growing feeling of resentment among the soldiers. Surely any man who has grit enough to enlist in the Canadian active service force and is willing to give everything, even his life, is entitled to the very best this country can give him during his training period. I would have thought that this government would benefit by the lesson learned in the last war, because we all realize that in time of war the emotional strain is much greater, and the average soldier will go to almost any length to get home to see his family or his sweetheart.

Another feature I wish to mention is the cheerlessness of such camps as Petawawa. This camp may be all right in the summer, but it certainly is no place for winter training, and yet I understand that there are several thousand men who are quartered there and will continue to be there during the winter months. Petawawa is some fourteen miles from the town of Pembroke. From now on, as the days are getting shorter, the men are off parade at four-thirty o'clock in the afternoon or shortly thereafter. Apart from the Y.M.C.A. and other service club huts there is no provision for their recreation or amusement. Where troops are quartered in towns and cities they have a decided advantage, because they can go down town; they can change their surroundings; there are picture shows and bowling alleys which they can visit and where they can meet their friends. These are simple matters, but they all tend to break the monotony of the soldier's life. But at Petawawa, which is only a sample of such places, there is no such provision; and as I pointed out before, many of the men are a great distance from their homes and unable to pay the cost of transportation.

Apparently the government realizes that this condition is becoming serious, because within the last ten days orders were issued by national defence headquarters that all troops were to be instructed that to ride on trains or use other methods of transportation without payment was an offence and must cease. But this illustrates again the lengths to which the soldier will go in order to get home. I would make the following suggestion to the government, that every soldier be allowed two week-end leaves a month, one leave with free transportation, the second leave at his own expense. The leave with free transportation would be to his own home or, if his home were too distant, to whatever point he would choose. But there should be attached the condition that the soldier would be entitled to these two leaves only if he had committed no offences during the preceding month. I am more than satisfied that if some such plan were adopted, the various commanding officers and others charged with discipline would find most of their difficulties disappear. The soldier then would be more content and his family would more readily accept his absence. But whether or not this plan is adopted, I cannot too strongly urge upon the government the necessity of doing something about free transportation for soldiers, and in particular that they make a special effort to give this free transportation in connection with leave for Christmas and New Year's, which are fast approaching.

Mr. RALSTON: If my hon. friend will permit me to interrupt, do I understand him to advocate that there should be one free leave a month?

Mr. WHITE: One free leave a month, and one at his own expense.

Mr. RALSTON: That would be twelve leaves each year with free transportation. Is that right?

Mr. WHITE: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. WHITE: I could finish in just a moment if I might have permission.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Go ahead.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the consent of the house.

Mr. WHITE: I want to mention just one other matter and then I shall have finished. For many years there has been a great deal of resentment among the veterans of the last war with regard to the manner in which they have been treated by the pension department. I am quite frank in saying that the Conservative party have not treated the veterans any