

side you when you are fighting, and to make a distinction between the men who have volunteered and the men who have been sent over under the N.R.M.A. would be indefensible.

Mr. GREEN: Is it not a fact that the complaint made in the editorial was about N.R.M.A. troops who were never in the fighting at all but went over to the continent after the fighting had ended and are now being sent home ahead of the men who did the fighting?

Mr. ABBOTT: As General Simonds indicated in his message, it was perhaps unfortunate that a few N.R.M.A. men should have been posted to the first division on or shortly after VE-day. That was the case, although I believe there were very few. But having been posted to the first division in the ordinary course, not by any process of special selection but just in the ordinary course, they were no longer N.R.M.A. men but just soldiers who had been sent over from England to reinforce a particular unit. As General Simonds has indicated, perhaps it was unfortunate that that step was taken, but it was taken, although not by the Minister of National Defence or the government here in Ottawa. That step was taken overseas. That may be a subject for criticism; I do not know. However, I am advised that relatively few in that category were posted to that division. Having been posted to that division, if the men had a point score in excess of 50, between 50 and 150, they would come back with their units. If they have not that point score, they will not.

I do not know that I should go into details to justify the present system. The reason, to anybody who understands the problems of repatriation, are obvious. If you did not follow that system you would soon, for instance, be without any cooks, senior officers or N.C.O.'s. It was felt after most careful consideration by General Crerar and his officers overseas, and this has been known to the troops overseas and to this country for the last four or five months, that there should be no distinction made—and this is the policy which is being followed—both as to the volunteer soldier and the so-called N.R.M.A. soldier, provided he has the required point score.

Mr. GREEN: Am I to understand that the minister will obtain copies of the editorials and—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, this is a question arising out of the minister's statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I think I have already been very generous to hon. members.

I would call their attention to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, third edition, page 125, also May, 245, on standing order 44:

After a minister has answered a question asked by a member when the orders of the day are called, no discussion of any kind should take place. Mr. Speaker Lowther laid down the rule about this on the 5th July, 1915, in the British House of Commons, where the practice is practically the same as ours. He said: "All supplementary questions are irregular and are not provided for at all in any standing order. It is entirely a matter of grace. I may say generally that the object of supplementary questions is to elucidate any ambiguity in the reply of a minister or to seek for some further information if he can give it; but supplementary questions should not be put, and ought not to be put, to embarrass a minister or to lead him to give an answer in a hurry which at a subsequent time he might be sorry that he gave. I will give as much freedom as I possibly can, but at the same time there must be some limits."

Mr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I was not intending to carry on the discussion. All I wanted to do was to ask the minister to make sure that he had given his undertaking that he would obtain copies of these editorials and place them on *Hansard*. That is all I ask.

Mr. ABBOTT: I have already given that undertaking, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GREEN: That is all I want.

Mr. BRACKEN: May I ask the minister, arising out of the statement he has just made, what body determines the official policy of *Maple Leaf*? The minister may have mentioned that in his statement.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes, I did. The *Maple Leaf*, as the leader of the opposition knows, is purely an army newspaper set up by the department of public relations, headed overseas by Colonel Malone, and in discussion with public relations officers overseas Colonel Malone worked out the method of editing and publishing the *Maple Leaf*. Following those discussions the policy was laid down which I have outlined and which is contained in this signal from which I have quoted. It was approved by the other defence ministers, by General Crerar, and by General Murchie, chief of staff here. That is my information as to the manner in which the policy was determined.

#### GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

##### CONTINUATION OF DEBATE IN REPLY

The house resumed from Friday, September 21, consideration of the motion of Mr. W. M. Benidickson for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech