

the basis of the present exemption, or in other words exemption right up to the pay and allowances of a first-class warrant officer. His pay and allowances are exempt now, as well as the cost of his rations; let the exemption for these officers start at that figure. It should be possible to work it out on some such basis as that. I never could see why you tax the cost of the rations and why you tax the dependents' allowances which are paid for these men.

Mr. ILSLEY: That is the rule which is applied to civilians.

Mr. GREEN: There is too much of this trying to keep these men in the same classification as civilians. We should get away from it. They are not at all in the same classification as civilians; they deserve entirely different treatment. I think the minister could work out some scheme which would solve this problem, perhaps along the line which I have suggested. Let us not focus our attention on conditions here in Ottawa; if the men here are not doing proper military duty, they should be put in civilian clothes.

Mr. ILSLEY: On the question of keeping them in civilian life, the much-abused treasury board tries to do that so far as the civil service is concerned. When persons in the civil service are proposing to take a commission in the army and discharge substantially the duties they discharged before, their cases have to be reported to treasury board, and a great many differences arise between treasury board and the various defence departments as to whether they should be permitted to put on uniform. It has been my unpleasant duty often to take the side of the controversy of trying to keep them out of uniform, and in most cases it has been a losing battle. The arguments advanced are, that they are going to work with men in uniform; that they must have authority; that they must be in a position to uphold their side in a discussion, and that others have been put in uniform.

Mr. HOMUTH: Churchill never was.

Mr. ILSLEY: Considerations of discipline are advanced. It is said that they must go; maybe there is no intention of their going anywhere but Ottawa, but they can be sent; and so on. Well, it is just a perpetual headache trying to fight these cases, and I usually lose out. If I do not lose out it is another black eye to treasury board, because treasury board is trying to control things it does not know anything about.

Mr. ROSS (Calgary East): Of the 24,000 commissioned officers in Canada, I wonder whether the minister could tell us how many are in a medical category which would make them acceptable for overseas service. When I introduced this discussion I had considered this matter; and I do not think officers who are not qualified for overseas service by reason of not being medically fit, and who are just holding down civilian jobs, should be exempt from taxation. But if a man has offered his services, his services have been accepted, and he is medically fit for overseas service and of the proper age, I think he is entitled to a great deal of consideration.

Mr. MACDONALD (Brantford City): Every officer is liable for overseas service.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: No.

Mr. HOMUTH: He has to be physically fit.

Mr. ROSS (Calgary East): When I asked for exemption I was limiting my request on behalf of those who are medically fit for overseas service. I do not think those who are not in that category are entitled to such consideration. Could the minister give us any idea as to the number who are medically fit?

Mr. ILSLEY: No, I cannot.

Mr. BOUCHER: While we are on this point, I wonder if the minister has considered the matter of compulsory saving as far as this particular class of people is concerned. It seems to me there is some divergence of opinion with regard to what is fair with regard to the taxation of soldiers going overseas, soldiers returning from overseas, the ladies, and the soldiers who are here in Canada. But it seems to me that it would be pretty sound policy to embark on a system of compulsory savings, even in excess of that under the present act, for the soldiers in that particular position, so that the government could have the use of the money during the war. The spending power of the soldier in Canada would be reduced and the rehabilitation problem would be greatly facilitated by the soldier having that reserve coming to him when the war is over. In all these questions we have been discussing for the last fifteen or twenty minutes, I believe a very interesting sphere of research would be along the line of a policy of compulsory savings, even in lieu of taxation to a great extent.

Mr. GREEN: If I may interrupt on that just for a moment; if such a suggestion were adopted it would strike at the root of all the legislation to help soldiers, the general plan of which is that the government will help the