

*Supply—National Defence*

concerning which there is no precedent inside the United Nations or outside.

**Mr. Blair:** I should like to get some information from the Minister of National Defence about the personnel of this police force going from Canada. In his discussion with the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich he said that 165 members of the Queen's Own were in the 18-year old class. I think the number of Queen's Own personnel concerned is 952. Therefore we have 165 out of 952, which is a percentage of 17.3. I am disturbed by this percentage of 17.3. In previous wars in which we have had experience our troops were in a climate somewhat the same as that of Canada. The first two wars were in Europe, but conditions in desert warfare and so on are going to be entirely different.

There is no doubt, and let me be clear on this, that these 18-year olds will be brave, bold, venturesome and enthusiastic, but I think this is a very high percentage of 18-year olds. They compose almost one-fifth of the number of the battalion. I say I find that somewhat disturbing.

I should also like to obtain some information from the minister as to the arrangements to look after these young Canadians. Apparently the *Magnificent* is going to serve as a base. Just what accommodation will there be on the *Magnificent* in their so-called sick bay? These men should have a base hospital. An hon. member mentioned that the establishment of a small base hospital next to headquarters is not a good thing. I fully agree with that. In the first war we saw something of what happened in that regard, and I think the minister has some knowledge of that event.

But let us assume there is a sick bay on the *Magnificent* and a small base hospital. You are going to have to take your convalescents out of there or the hospital will be full. Is there any hospital ship accommodation? Is there any way they can be moved to the mainland for convalescence in Cyprus, Crete or some place like that? We want to be sure that these young Canadians are going to get the very best of accommodation.

I should like to suggest to the minister that this expeditionary force should be hand-picked physically. Let the medical officers go over the men and go over them again. If there are any tests that can show a man's stability or weaknesses, let those tests be used. I think it will pay dividends in the long run. I am anxious that this force be one of the best forces Canada can send because it is representing Canada, and I say again that I am disturbed that 17.3 per cent

of the Queen's Own are 18-year olds. I should like the minister to make a statement on this matter.

**Mr. Campney:** If I may say so, there is some confusion with regard to the treatment of persons who may become ill. When a contribution to the force from Canada was first envisaged nothing was known with respect to whether there were any medical facilities or base facilities to treat people who might become ill. The *Magnificent* was selected as a base temporarily because there were no such facilities so far as we knew available. In equipping the *Magnificent* we put in a small hospital as a temporary expedient.

I am advised—and this will answer the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich—that the troops are being very well looked after so far at Abu Suweir, and they have good quarters at Capodichino near Naples. The Norwegians are running a base hospital, and I am sure that the medical facilities that will be available on land will be adequate when the time comes when they are needed.

As to the number of younger soldiers, I am really not perturbed about that because we do try to get healthy young men who will make a career in the army. I can assure the hon. member they are very carefully looked after medically and in every other way, and that the medical examinations that have taken place are very thorough. I was in Egypt for six months in the first world war when I was not out of my teens. I certainly was looked after and I thrived on it.

**Mr. Blair:** You were not doing footwork; you were in the hospital.

**Mr. Campney:** I was doing a lot of footwork.

**Mr. Blair:** Yes, in the hospital.

**Mr. Campney:** In hospital and out of hospital. But seriously speaking, I agree with the hon. member that we must pay particular attention to health in that area. I think that is being very carefully looked after, and I am sure the hospitals will be land-based.

I might answer another question raised yesterday by the hon. member for Winnipeg North, I believe, regarding tropical clothing. We have made investigations into that matter, and I am assured that for the winter months the ordinary dress they are now wearing is the proper dress for troops in the Egyptian area. I might also say that the chief of the general staff advised me this morning that he had a report from the commander of the Canadian forces with regard to the situation in which the troops find themselves in Egypt, and that the amenities such as