

depot or headquarters—I do not recall which it is in Fredericton; I am speaking of my hon. friend's own province—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): At the depot.

Mr. RALSTON: —there is there a five-man board composed of army medical doctors and specialists of all types, so that instead of sending a man to see a T.B. specialist or a heart man or some other specialist, the board can deal with him as nearly as possible at one continuous sitting, and they endeavour to see to it that when a man is accepted into the army his examination will have been such that he will be able to stay in. We have had from 70,000 to 80,000 discharges altogether, not all medical discharges, but that many altogether.

On the other hand, we have had bitter complaints. Someone has suggested—I think it was the hon. member for Renfrew South—that the army doctors had been too strict; that in the last three months or more they had turned down nearly 50 per cent of the men. That is what gives rise to the criticism which is made not only by the hon. member for Renfrew South but by the public generally, and particularly by my colleague the Minister of Labour who is calling these men up and saying: You will not take them when you get them—you are too choosy.

Mr. MacNICOL: Is not the reason for so many turn-downs that the vast majority of physically fit men have already been enrolled?

Mr. RALSTON: No; there ought to be men physically fit in these age classes. I have some figures from south of the line which indicate that we are not much stiffer in our physical examinations than they are there. I am saying that, on the one side, there is the complaint that men get into the army when they should not, and therefore there are many discharges, and on the other hand there is the complaint that the army medical boards are too stiff and that we are wasting money by having so many turn-downs.

Mr. ADAMSON: The rejections are increasing; they are up to 50 per cent?

Mr. RALSTON: They are increasing over last year.

Mr. ADAMSON: Over the long-term period, I mean?

Mr. RALSTON: I think they are increasing over last year.

To come back to the remarks of the hon. member for York-Sunbury, what we are endeavouring to do is to have medical

boards that we can pretty well stand on, so to speak, and we want them imbued with the idea that we do not wish to turn down a man who will make good in the army in some position under this new system. We think we shall get better results by doing it in that way.

I want to thank the hon. member for Renfrew South for having so clearly explained the system regarding which I had only the barest outline. I appreciate his having put on record the statement which he has made; and if the hon. member for St. John-Albert were here, who is so interested in the directorate of public information, I would point out that the hon. member for Renfrew South has been able to give the committee more information on the subject than even the minister.

I also want to withdraw humbly and apologetically the indication that I gave, in answer to a seductive question from the other side, that Mr. Pulhems was the man who invented this new system.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: It was not intended to be seductive but rather to elucidate.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: This afternoon one or two subjects have been reviewed which I had intended to bring up under other items, but apparently they come under item 2.

The first is with regard to doctors in the army. Notwithstanding all the assurances the minister has given us, my information from doctors both in and out of the service is that a great many doctors are still being employed in the army on work that does not require a graduate doctor. I have heard of doctors who are required to put in their days on what is pretty much routine work which could just as well be done by medical students or others who are not graduate doctors. In view of the great need of doctors at the present time, I suggest to the minister that every possible means be taken to see to it that every doctor in the armed forces is used in essential medical services. I have on my desk a request from a very large community which is being served by only one doctor and which was formerly served by five doctors. They have asked me to request the minister or the department for the return of one or two doctors from that community who are now in the armed services. There is a real need to conserve to the best possible advantage what medical personnel we have in the army.

Concerning housing for soldiers' wives and dependents, I do not know what the minister or his department can do, but it seems to me