

The war may last for a couple of years longer, and although it would have been good business economically, from the point of view of saving man-power, to have had one medical board for the three services at the beginning of the war, it is not too late, because if the war drags on for another two or three years, not only the services of the armed forces but also the civilian services will suffer for lack of trained medical personnel.

Mr. RALSTON: I am glad that the hon. member has spoken as he has. I felt really that what I had said was inadequate to deal with the situation, on which I hold views as strongly as the hon. gentleman does. I may say to him that when I was speaking the other day of the members of the medical profession in the armed forces I intended to mention, and I should have mentioned, the cooperation which has been given by the medical profession generally to the armed forces, whether the members of the profession happen to be in uniform or not. Speaking as a member of another profession, I am sure that no profession could have given more wholeheartedly or more devotedly or effectually of their time and talents than the medical profession in Canada generally has done, and that has meant long hours of service contributed gratuitously in an endeavour to assist the armed forces and to help in the prosecution of the war.

The Canadian Medical association, including their French-speaking compatriots in the province of Quebec, have all united to see that everything possible was done in order to serve the armed forces and at the same time to endeavour to meet the needs of the civilian community; and men have worked early and late, committees of doctors in the various towns, at some disagreeable tasks in an effort to find men who could serve in each of these capacities.

In reference to the matter of scrambling of medical services in the armed forces, that is a subject which is being considered by the medical assignment and procurement board which has made a survey of all Canada in order to ascertain, first, the supply, and, second, the needs, not only of the armed services but of the civilian population as well. In their report I am sure they will be dealing with the question of the best use of medical man-power in the three armed services and also in the department of pensions, which is the other governmental service particularly concerned. What may be done in respect of that matter I cannot of course predict.

Members of the committee will recall that the unscrambling of the services came at a time when strong representations were made

[Mr. McCann.]

that there were differences in technique and in the manner of handling the various disabilities that arose as a result of the particular service in which a man happened to be engaged, and it was also at a time when medical man-power was not nearly as scarce as it is to-day. The assignment and procurement board has the matter fully under consideration, and the government will give every attention to it when the report is received.

Mr. GRAYDON: Perhaps it might be of interest to know, now that the three ministers are in the house, the distribution of medical men in the three services. How many are there in the army, how many in the air force and how many in the navy? That goes to the root of the question that has been raised.

Mr. MACDONALD (Kingston City): May I ask the hon. member for Renfrew South one question with regard to the figures he has given of the medical men on the Pacific coast. I understood him to say that there were fifty-four medical men in that area for a total force of 6,000. I wonder if he has checked those figures. My impression is that the number of doctors he has given is too high. It is about thirty, I think, but I cannot speak with assurance on the point.

Mr. McCANN: I have not made that statement from my own personal knowledge. I was told by a medical man in the service that as at November 1, 1942, these figures were correct, fifty-four doctors for 6,000 men in the naval services there. I am not making that statement critically, because it is only a maldistribution of man-power, and at the time it may well have been that men were congregated in British Columbia when the forces were there and more forces may have been expected. I can readily understand the difficulties which the minister and his advisers will have with reference to the distribution of medical personnel. You cannot just call up a doctor or procure one out of a mail order catalogue, and it may have been that the men were there prior to the time when the forces that it was expected would be there had arrived. I am quite sure that such a proportion may exist in other places and in other parts of the service, and in making the statement I do not intend to be critical. My only wish is that the men who are entitled to it shall receive the best service there is, but that at the same time other parts of the country, in civilian and industrial life, may also have a fair distribution.

Mr. MACDONALD (Kingston City): If there were such a number of doctors on the