

*War Appropriation—Army*

out the disease and only report to some medical officer when it was too late. The medical officer might subsequently become a disability himself or be killed; the field dressing station at which he worked might be blown up. In such a case the man is given the benefit of the doubt and the disability is regarded as attributable to service.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I agree with the minister as far as he goes. But I have one specific case of a man who was accepted as A1. He trained for over a year, was promoted and was certainly a good soldier. When he went into hospital they told him that he had this condition when he entered the army. He himself did not think so, but believed that it was the result of an accident in training. I have heard of many cases of a like nature and it seems to me that some insurance principle should apply for the benefit of these chaps, and that the onus should not be on them to prove their case.

Mr. RALSTON: I think that is a matter of administration rather than of legislation.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): That may be.

Mr. GILLIS: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Chairman. My point of order is this: Is it permissible to discuss pensions under the estimate now before us? If it is, then this group is quite prepared to carry on a thorough discussion of that question. But I cannot find on the printed sheet before us any item under which pensions can properly be discussed. I would like your ruling, Mr. Chairman. If you are not going to limit the discussion to the item before the Chair but are going to allow a discussion of pensions on this item we are prepared to discuss them.

Mr. RALSTON: Before you give your ruling, Mr. Chairman, let me say that I prefaced my remarks by saying that I did not think pensions were within my bailiwick, meaning within my jurisdiction. I do not think the question could properly be discussed on this particular item or on any of the items now before the committee. But I answered the hon. member's question out of courtesy. He rather pressed that the subject was not very far away from soldiering, and of course it is not. But many subjects which affect soldiers do not come within the Department of National Defence, and I think this subject is one of them.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I agree, but the matter had to do with the medical officer in this

[Mr. Ralston.]

particular case, and the medical officers are a portion of the army. I said that the two were very closely linked together, and the point I wanted to make was with reference to the medical officers of the army.

Mr. RALSTON: I have asked my colleague, the Minister of Pensions and National Health, to make a note of the case.

The CHAIRMAN: I am of opinion that the point of order has been properly answered by the Minister of National Defence himself. I say again that it is not within my power to limit the discussion to the item before the Chair. That is absolutely within the realm of the members themselves. We must recognize that on a vote of this magnitude

Mr. GILLIS: We are trying to stick to the items that are on this sheet of estimates, Mr. Chairman, and trying to relate our remarks to the item before us; but if a rambling discussion is to be permitted we want to know, and we will get into it too. I think fifty per cent of the discussion this afternoon was certainly not relevant to the item. Pensions come entirely within another department altogether. I want to be helpful and to stick to the item before us.

Mr. GRAYDON: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member for Cape Breton South is quite right in his remarks with respect to pensions, but when he suggests that hon. members have been out of order in discussing general matters of army welfare on this item for pay and allowances I have to disagree with him. This is the only item, I submit, upon which general matters relating to the armed forces can be discussed. If one looks at the other items in this appropriation, it will be found that they are confined to matters of a technical nature, upon which general matters relating to the whole department cannot be discussed. I think that should be made plain. All these matters we have been discussing come under the general heading.

Mr. GILLIS: Still on the point of order, Mr. Chairman, and replying to what the leader of the opposition has said, I find that this printed sheet of estimates provides an opportunity for the discussion of practically every matter that comes within the realm of the defence department. Then there are supplementary grants such as the one for the dependents' board of trustees. We have discussed that matter for practically the last two days. Other grants are specifically set out at the bottom of the sheet. There is also an item