

work. Ground service men are granted commissions. Under such circumstances, surely the men who are facing what these men on operational duties must face, have won their right to commissions.

I would be pleased to hear the minister's statement as to what objections there may be against the granting of these commissions. Is it a matter of pay? Is it a matter of some special social distinction? Is one to be looked upon as a "gentleman" and the other just a "player"? Why should there be any objection to giving them commissions? The country would like to have an answer.

Then, as was asked by the hon. member for Calgary East, what steps are being taken to Canadianize the Royal Canadian Air Force? Is any obstacle being placed in the way of men in the Royal Air Force who desire to transfer to the Royal Canadian Air Force? If they are in a Royal Air Force squadron, is it possible for them to work together as Canadians, in one crew, or is there any Canadian control over them?

I have only one serious criticism to make, and it arises from what I believe was a mistake. I came across a case in my own province respecting a young man who, after a serious air accident, was discharged from the air force. While he was acting as gunner in aircrew on a practice flight, the aeroplane in which he was operating crashed with another machine in mid-air. This boy's brother was killed in the same crash, and the boy himself sustained twenty-eight fractured bones, but is still alive. He was offered a commission, because it appeared the authorities wanted him to stay in the air force. I believe he asked for his discharge. I hold in my hand a letter from the deputy minister in which he states that this man was discharged from the Royal Canadian Air Force on November 3, 1942, at his own request, in category A4hBh, which means fit for home service in Canada. The deputy minister points out:

Although suffering from some disability at the time, it was considered that he would eventually be fit for service at least on the ground, and he could not, therefore, be discharged as permanently unfit for all forms of duty. His disabilities were noted in the medical board proceedings.

When I saw this young man he was carrying on as a relief railway agent. He was suffering, and was wearing a brace at the time. His own remarks in the matter were rather interesting. He said:

When I was discharged I asked them if I may make an application for a pension. From the way they talked it would be more than useless to make one, so I never bothered.

[Mr. Castleden.]

Mr. POWER: Whom did he ask? I would say it would be useless to make it to the air force, but there is a board of pension commissioners to which he could apply at any time. We have nothing to do with that.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: When he spoke about it, that was the reply he got.

My second point is, I believe, a reflection of a similar condition in the army. The women in the women's divisions of the air force, army and navy are surely entitled to equal pay for equal work. I think the minister would have the support of everyone if he were to see that that was brought about.

Then, dependents' allowance should be payable to those who are entitled to it, even if they are in the women's division. In many instances these women have been supporting parents, or other dependents. They are rendering a valuable service, and I believe the minister would agree that in performing some phases of the work they are even superior to the men. In my opinion, they are entitled to the same pay and allowances as are granted men in the army.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

### After Recess

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. HOBLITZELL: Mr. Chairman, as one of those who have taken up very little time of the committee, I should like to say a few words in connection with the operation and leadership of the Royal Canadian Air Force. I have for various reasons been very much interested in this branch of the service, no doubt due to the fact that I know so many young men of the force who have paid the supreme sacrifice and many others who also are ready to give everything they have to defend our country in this fight for freedom and justice.

Let me pause for just one moment to offer my hearty congratulations to the minister of National Defence for Air upon his splendid speech on the floor of this house, as reported at pages 3723 and 3724 of *Hansard* of June 26, 1942. With such leadership the Royal Canadian Air Force is bound to fly at a very high altitude.

The Royal Canadian Air Force is one of Canada's chief sources of pride in our whole war effort. It is composed of young men who are among the finest in the land. In many theatres of war its members have brought glory to themselves and to their country and will continue to do so in even greater measure