#149 War: European 1939: Canada-Chaplains

ABSURD APPLICATION OF RULE TO CHAPLAINS IN CANADA.

So far as combatant personnel are concerned, there is an obvious reason for placing an age limit of 60 years on officers serving with Canadian armed forces. The same rule may properly apply even to chaplains who are serving with the forces in the field since the life is not a particularly easy one. But it seems absurd that the same rule should be automatically applied to chaplains who are serving with the forces in Canada.

Yet it has been pointed out to the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada by Rt. Rev. G. A. Wells, principal Protestant chaplain, that this hard and fast rule will cause the withdrawal in September of 15 Protestant chaplains stationed in Canada. Among those involved are eight tested senior district chaplains who have been with the work ever since it was started early in the war and who are thoroughly familiar with their job.

It is too late to do anything about it, as replacements have already been arranged. It must be regretted, however, that a mechanical removal of this kind should be allowed to cause an upheaval in the work of the chaplains. It might have been hoped that at this stage in the war the men who have become trained in their duties would be allowed to carry on for the duration. A little mental elasticity at Ottawa would have enabled the authorities to recognize that chaplains in Canada need not necessarily be subject to the same stringent age limitations as apply to officers in other phases of service.

041-022-007