

are physically fit and deemed likely to make efficient combat soldiers. This is a first priority and it is being dealt with as such. The standard of training will be brought to the high level we insisted on in England.

There are a considerable number of men in the N.R.M.A. whose physical fitness is below the standard required for first-line combatant duties but who are, in all other respects, capable of rendering useful service in the field, in base installations, on the line of communications and in the forward area behind the battle fronts.

In the British Army these men are grouped into the corps of pioneers to act as a reserve of labour for the engineers for the construction of roads and railways and aerodromes and field fortifications and similar works; to man the base depots, to load the supplies of food and ammunition; to help in the repair establishments and generally to do unskilled labour wherever required to set free the combat troops from these ancillary tasks.

Canadian employment companies are also being organized. The military side of this training is not extensive. It is from this employment corps that we propose to discharge any requirements for help on works of national importance to the prosecution of the war which we are required to undertake.

In this arrangement you will, I know, agree that two safeguards are very necessary. The first that the tasks requested are really of national importance; the second that by undertaking to do them with our employment companies we are not depriving anyone in Canada of gainful employment they otherwise would have.

I am in no position in the defence department to give the consideration which is required to the application of these important safeguards to tasks other than those which are carried out under the defence department for strictly military purposes, and so we are asking the Minister of Reconstruction to undertake the first responsibility, and the Minister of Labour the second. Until we have certificates from these departments, the work will not be undertaken.

These certificates may be revoked at any time by the ministers concerned to meet the changing requirements and conditions and to open opportunities for gainful employment to men outside the N.R.M.A. as they may become available.

Since we must hold a considerable number of men in the N.R.M.A. in order to ensure that men returning from overseas shall have first claim on remunerative employment, I intend to give the men who are retained in the em-

ployment companies useful work to do which will be of benefit in their training and which will make a considerable contribution to our war effort. It is perhaps needless to repeat that only the pay and allowances provided for in military regulations will be allowed, and leave will not be on any more generous scale than is given our troops overseas.

There are a number of other categories of men in the N.R.M.A. who are neither suitable for combat units nor for the employment companies. I refer to those who have become physically unfit, and these I propose should be considered individually and that those who are below the category for military duty should be discharged.

There are others in the lower physical categories who, by reason of their technical or other qualifications, should be placed in industry to aid in this great effort which is required. These we propose to place in a reserve, which can be released from military duties subject to recall.

I have dealt with the N.R.M.A. in some considerable detail because it presents a problem of great difficulty which cannot be resolved by any single measure.

Now may I return to the great question which brings anxiety to all of us to-day. I mean the provision of the additional reinforcements required to ensure the effective support of our units and formations overseas in the field and to give them the reserves which they will need to carry forward the great battles which lie ahead.

It is absolutely necessary to the confidence of our fighting forces in the European theatres that there be a substantial reserve of reinforcements made available overseas. The absence of such a reserve might mean casualties that would not otherwise be incurred.

The lives of our men in the fighting lines must be guarded in every way that is dependent upon action which can be taken from here. The numbers required to make up the reserve that is necessary are larger than could be provided in time by the volunteer conversion of trained and fit personnel of our N.R.M.A. men to general service.

I have said that except for some 16,000 men we are able to meet all requirements from men who have come forward voluntarily. I have said that it is our purpose to maintain the voluntary system to the limit. I have stated that 5,000 additional trained infantry must be available early in December to safeguard the position at the end of January; that another 5,000 must be found in January, and some 6,000 in the succeeding months.

I have brought these facts before my colleagues in the cabinet. An order in council