

outlook, new self-respect, and a determination that comes from having made a great decision. That is bound to make them better soldiers. This is very important, because we are as much concerned with the quality, as with the numbers, of men sent overseas as reinforcements.

We must remember that if draftees are sent overseas before they volunteer, they will not be going to reinforce an army of drafted men. Over and over again it has been said that conscripted men would be received without enthusiasm by the volunteers they were sent overseas to join. It is also said that the presence of conscripts would constitute a source of division, and possible dissension, in the fighting units. That is nevertheless a risk the government would have to take, if it were necessary to enable Canada to bear her just share of the load in the winning of the war.

*Concerning Numbers of Trained Men Available and Effect thereon of Resort to Conscription*

But that is not the situation. There are some thousands of trained volunteers already overseas or about to be despatched overseas as reinforcements. Others are being re-mustered. There are, in addition, many thousands of volunteers in training in the army in Canada. Every day draftees are volunteering for overseas service. We believe their number can be increased by emphasizing anew the need and the opportunity for overseas service.

We had to ask ourselves one other question: How many additional men would be immediately available if compulsion were resorted to in order to send draftees overseas? I have told you that the present effective total of draftees in the army is under 60,000. Of that number only about 42,000 are considered suitable material for infantry reinforcements. Some 16,000 of these men are trained as infantry. It is estimated that about 8,000 of them are sufficiently trained so that they could be ready for combat at an early date.

Without any compulsion or any intensification of present methods a considerable number of these draftees would volunteer. We believe many more can be secured by a special appeal. The actual difference in numbers secured by the two methods might be very small indeed. The voluntary system has not broken down. At the moment, it is subject to an added strain which calls for an intensified effort at home, in the period immediately ahead, particularly to provide personnel in an advanced stage of training.

How great the difficulties would be in substituting conscription for overseas service for the voluntary system no one knows. But everyone who is honest with himself knows that there would be

genuine difficulties and that they might be very grave. Instead, we are redoubling our efforts to meet the existing situation by the voluntary method. In these efforts, I appeal for the patriotic co-operation of all Canadians.

*Concerning the Position of Men Drafted for National Service in Canada*

Many of you will ask why, if they are not to be sent overseas, the draftees are not disbanded? There are several reasons. One is that ever since early in 1942 draftees have been enlisting and going overseas in thousands. Many more are trained, and will wish to volunteer for service overseas now that it is clear that the need for "home defence" has passed. Another reason is that while the war is not yet advanced to the stage where the government can announce a detailed plan of demobilization, it has been decided to follow the principle that those men who have given the longest and the hardest service will be given the first opportunity of demobilization. Obviously that means a first preference in discharge and in employment opportunities for those with overseas service.

But this does not mean that draftees will be maintained in idleness. As long as we have an army overseas, Canada remains the ultimate base of its operations. We must maintain a considerable military establishment for the training of reinforcements, the provision of supply and certain other non-operational duties. Military garrisons in Newfoundland and on the coasts cannot be entirely abandoned. Many of these duties can be and are being performed by volunteers who are not fit for combat service. Some of these duties will necessarily continue to be discharged by draftees.

While we prefer the voluntary system for overseas service, compulsion where necessary will continue to be used to ensure that fit men of military age perform national service required by our war effort. Draftees employed in national service will remain in the army under discipline at army rates of pay. Obviously, it would not be fair to allow draftees preferential treatment by giving them civilian work at civilian rates of pay.

Another reason why draftees, except those who for physical or other reasons have ceased to be useful as soldiers, should not be disbanded, is that so long as they are in the army and adequately trained, they will continue to be a potential ultimate reserve of reinforcements whose compulsory employment in any theatre may, in the light of developing circumstances, have to be reconsidered.