

number of troops being 460. One of my officers came into my office one day with a great pile of documents of this character, which contained the names of all the soldiers comprising that nominal roll. He said: "There are 460 names, and you can see what it would mean in the case of a ship carrying 5,000 troops, particularly when such a ship's sailing is cancelled; in such an event we have to take pen and ink or pencil and run a line through them and prepare the whole thing over again in order to make the roll for the sailing."

I have also referred briefly to the scarcity of ships, and in addition to what I said before recess, I would like to add this further fact: Canada is not the only country to which soldiers must be returned. There are Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, and there is a movement of troops from Egypt to India, and troops returning from Mesopotamia and Palestine and the Mediterranean, while to the United States vast numbers are coming back. In view of this, I think I might reasonably direct the attention of the House again to what has been accomplished in the matter of repatriating the Canadian army, especially when one considers the scarcity of ships as a result of submarine warfare and the tremendous demand which exists for shipping at the present time. The programme outlined by the authorities in Canada in regard to the number of troops that could be repatriated contemplated 20,000 for December and January, 30,000 for February, March and April, 40,000 for the month of May, and 45,000 a month after May. I presume that it was considered that as December and January were winter months, and in view of the uncertainty as to the kind of winter we should have and the fear of a blockade of the railways by reason of snowstorms, it would not be safe to attempt to repatriate more than the number mentioned for these months. It was very easy to obtain ships at that time because other countries and the other dominions had not got as far advanced in the work of demobilization as we had. We carried out the programme for these two months, and in February 30,000 was the number fixed in the programme. We dispatched a considerable number of men in that month, but there was a falling off due chiefly to strikes and, to a limited extent, to the fact that we refused to take some ships to carry men considering they were not adequately equipped for the transportation of troops in winter on the North Atlantic owing to insufficiency of heating and lavatory accommodation and poor ventilation. We had to

discard these ships, but the difference was made up. To stop 3,000 men from embarking on a ship interrupts the system, because the men were all moving towards the shipping ports; and sometimes it was necessary to stop the movement of troops as far back as Belgium to meet the situation caused by sudden shortage of shipping. In March, however, we caught up more than we had lost in February. We discovered that the authorities in Canada could take more than 30,000 a month and we sent about 42,000 to Canada in March. In April, there were again bad strikes in England and we fell short. But in the month of May we have more than made up the shortage by sending some 52,000. On the whole, therefore, we have lived up to the programme, and have exceeded it on the average. It was thought that troops could be repatriated rapidly by way of the St. Lawrence route after the opening of navigation, but as a result of careful examination of the matter we found that there were not vessels capable of navigating the St. Lawrence that would carry more than ten to fifteen thousand troops into the St. Lawrence ports. After taking into consideration "military dependents"—the wives and children of soldiers—and a certain proportion of civilian passengers, we could not get into the St. Lawrence more than ten or fifteen thousand troops a month. Repatriation would therefore chiefly take place, even in summer, by way of Halifax, because that port can take in vessels capable of carrying large numbers. In addition to this, these vessels that come to Halifax go on to New York for cargoes and there take passengers back to England. I would call attention to a certain press notice which will throw some light on the careful manner in which we have endeavoured to guard the interests of our soldiers in connection with repatriation, and the fact that we have tried to give them satisfactory sleeping accommodation on board ship, proper meals, etc. The press despatch to which I refer reads:

One of ten troopships due yesterday with more than 26,000 returning American soldiers, the *Leviathan* had a total of 14,416 souls aboard when she made her pier at Hoboken. Of these 12,274 were troops.

The rest were officers and members of the crew.

In order to accommodate this unprecedented number of passengers, the troops aboard received only two meals a day, but there were no complaints.

Now, we have not deemed it wise to crowd men into ships to the same extent as some of the Allies have done in connection with