

number of men enrolled as draftees is about 68,000. Of these some 9,000 are on extended leave, on compassionate or other grounds. Many of them are unsuited for military duties. Of the so-called "home defence" force the effective total strength, therefore, is under 60,000.

Here I pause to correct one widespread false impression about the draftees. Of the 60,000 only 23,000 are from the Province of Quebec, and only 25,000 from all Canada are French speaking.

You will ask what has happened to the other 82,000 draftees accepted by the Army since 1941. There has been a wastage of about 33,000 including men discharged for medical or other reasons which unfitted them to be soldiers. About 6,000 draftees have enlisted as volunteers in the Navy or the Air Force. The largest group, about 43,000 have enlisted as volunteers for General Service in the army. General Service includes service overseas. In the army overseas fighting today are many thousands of men who were once draftees.

*Voluntary
response
of draftees*

The "home defence" army is not a static force. Its composition is constantly changing. This year, nearly 15,000 men have been called up and enrolled as draftees, and more than 10,000 draftees have volunteered for General Service. Since the landing in France in June voluntary enlistments for overseas from the "home defence" troops have been higher than the numbers called up and accepted as draftees.

From a purely military standpoint, there is no argument that it is preferable to reinforce a voluntary army with volunteers. The military authorities report that enlisting gives the draftees a new 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.

*The question of conscription
voluntary system vs. conscription*

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.

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,