

*Reinforcements*

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I am aware of the policies which are in effect.

Mr. GREEN: But are you aware of these facts?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: The men transferred from the other arms are put into the training stream and given the training appropriate to what they have been wanted for.

Mr. GREEN: Are these men being transferred now in that way and sent overseas?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: They are being remustered.

Mr. GREEN: And sent overseas?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes, when they have reached the appropriate stage of effectiveness; and the training is not necessarily complete here, because we have establishments in England which we must use to the best advantage.

Mr. GREEN: I am told that these men in some cases are being sent right off, shipped overseas, without receiving training here.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: We cannot talk in generalities in this matter. We are dealing with tens of thousands. If the hon. gentleman will give me a specific case I will give him a specific answer.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): There are thousands of them.

Mr. GREEN: What length of training will a man of that class get before he is put into the front line?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I shall be glad to give the hon. member that information. I take it he is anxious about those who are remustering. I will read the information in order to get it on the record:

The first eight weeks of training for every soldier is in basic military subjects, which include grenades, mines, booby traps, rifles and automatic and other weapons. Hence on remustering, say from artillery to infantry, the gunner has had considerable training with the weapons and other subjects peculiar to the infantry soldier. The gunner will require a refresher and probably more detailed training in these subjects and will require training in infantry tactics and some conditioning by marching, although his general physique should be good. In the United Kingdom, where most remustering is taking place, a special syllabus calling for a minimum of six weeks' training is applied and has been found sufficient to adequately train a gunner as an infantryman. In such cases where it is found, at the end of six weeks' training, that the soldier is not proficient in the infantry arm, provision is made for an extension of one or more weeks to bring him up to the standard required.

Mr. GREEN: So that in the average case a man from the ordnance or artillery in [Mr. Green.]

Canada, who has had basic training, although it may have been three years ago, will get only six weeks' training before being put into the line.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I would not say that is correct, because all through the courses there is going on a constant testing by experienced instructors, and wherever a man is found below par, below the standard, then what he has to take is adjusted accordingly.

Mr. GREEN: In the average case that man will face the enemy with only six weeks' training, according to your own statement.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, no.

Mr. GREEN: How long will he have?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: You cannot say—

Mr. GREEN: Your order says six weeks, with a week or two extra in some cases.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: You are talking about the average case. It might happen that he would go forward after six weeks of training, but usually he moves forward towards his unit in progressive stages.

Mr. GREEN: He might be in the line after six weeks of training.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: No. It would be something more than six weeks before he could possibly get to the line.

Mr. GREEN: How many weeks?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: There is a time required, after the six weeks' training, for transport forward from there, from the training schools in England across the channel and up through the pools in France, where training is kept on continuously, and the most important training which he can be given, when left out of battles with the units themselves.

Mr. GREEN: You are relying, then, on these men getting some of their training on their way from England to the front line?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: In the theatre, yes, very definitely so. Of course he has had eight weeks of basic training behind him.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, but that may have been two or three years ago. If you do not know it, some of the rest of us do, that in many cases these boys do not throw grenades or fire Bren guns when they get basic training in Canada.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: They would be checked on that, and those who did not have it would be detected by the instructor in the tests on elementary training, and would be given what was required.