

*Supply—National Defence*

drawing trades pay, and the country will reap the benefit of the training they received and the money spent on them. While it reduces the number of our tradesmen we are very proud that they are doing so. We do not feel that we are being weakened by supplying recruits for the brigade. Actually we feel that it is a challenge to the reserve army to supply these men and then to get busy and replace them.

It has been said, and rightly so, that there are no poor units in the army; there are only poor officers. I have attended many conferences and meetings where reserve army officers deplored what they thought were the conditions in Canada with respect to the reserve army. If the officers are not prepared to back the idea of the reserve army, then they cannot expect their troops to be enthusiastic. I feel that the success of my own unit was due entirely to the enthusiasm of the late commanding officer, and this enthusiasm was contagious to such an extent that not only the officers but all ranks had it. So many people feel that the government and the country owe them a living, and I am afraid that has been the attitude of many in the reserve army. They felt that the government should introduce compulsory military service and thus relieve them of the additional work and initiative which would be required to build up their own units. I feel this situation will disappear pretty well as a result of the government's move to recruit from the reserve army, and in putting the responsibility on the reserve army to supply the troops. The hon. member for Broadview spoke yesterday, and at page 2860 of *Hansard* he is reported as having said:

From my observations, I would say that the great majority of reserve units would not, on an average, parade more than 25 per cent of their authorized strength, and a large part of the numbers on parade are made up by the band.

I am sure the hon. member appreciates the problems of the reserve army because he is a part of it. I did not feel, however, that a general statement like that should be allowed to go unchallenged. It gives a false impression to the general public, and as a result of such statements the general public tends not to hold the reserve army in too high repute. In the first place, the relationship between the number of men on strength and the authorized war establishment is not important. The important factor is what percentage of the men on strength turn out. How many non-effectives has a unit? Unfortunately we have all had too many, but we are gradually getting rid of them.

This afternoon the minister said, and I would repeat, that it is not necessarily the

[Mr. George.]

idea of the reserve army to be up to strength. I would like to give one instance, and I hope the committee will bear with me if I refer to my own unit, because after all it is the only one I know. I inherited it; it must go on, and it is going on. Three weeks ago I went down to attend a church parade. My unit is spread out over a radius of eighty-five miles. For that church parade we brought them in to the number of over two hundred, plus the band; and I am sure the hon. member for Broadview did not mean to imply that bands were not important parts of the units.

Tradition, as we all know, is one of the things that contribute to a good unit. All reserve army regiments in Canada have a long history of which they are proud, but I am sure that some of our traditions should go by the board; some being carried on today are ridiculous. On the other hand we have some good traditions which should be retained. I feel that we should make new traditions, after careful thought, and carry them on. These traditions revolve around the badges, colours, battle honours, mascots and many other things. To those interested in reading about tradition and how it is affecting units I would recommend the May issue of *Mayfair*. On page 43 appears an article by Allister Grosart entitled "All regiments of the reserve are uneasy." Mr. Grosart has written a very good article on the history and traditions of reserve army regiments, and he sums it up by suggesting that one of the greatest mistakes we could make would be to adopt the United States system of numbering regiments. Some of us remember the way armoured corps regiments were numbered during the war. I remember very well when it happened, and it caused more dissatisfaction than any other single thing I can remember. Today we have reverted to our own names, and have dropped the numbers. It was with great satisfaction that I learned the Minister of National Defence had denied rumours that regiments were to be numbered, and said they would continue with their traditional names.

We all appreciated the tribute paid by the hon. member for Nanaimo to the Gloucestershire regiment. Our own regiments have their traditions, but those of the Gloucestershire regiment go back much further. I came across an article dealing with the traditions of that regiment, which had this to say:

The battalion was surrounded for three days and nights, stubbornly fought off the enemy from all directions, and finally the remnants cut their way out. It is an inspiring story, but most interesting is the point that the Glo'sters have done it before, 150 years ago.