

Mr. McNAUGHTON: There may well have been complaints, but the conditions under which men are sent back on prisoner of war escort were prescribed and laid down, and selection for that duty is very much sought after.

Mr. BROOKS: They are home for thirty days, I believe?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes, free of transportation time.

Mr. BROOKS: I asked the minister if he had received many objections from these men to returning overseas, while there are under the N.R.M.A. young men who they feel should take their places.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: There were reports, but I am not aware of them personally.

Mr. BROOKS: I believe the department intends bringing home men who have been overseas for four and five years, which I believe is a splendid thing.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. BROOKS: These men have been away for a long time, and they are war weary. How long is it anticipated they will remain in Canada?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: The minimum period is thirty days, clear of time taken up in transportation. As a matter of fact, although I cannot be specific on the point I think we shall find that a good many of these people with special experience will be kept here as instructors and so on in the training scheme.

Mr. BROOKS: You would not say that you could absorb four or five hundred of these men each month.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Our difficulty in working it out has been the availability of transportation from the theatres of war back to Canada. I believe the number we have this month is about 450. I am hopeful that in subsequent months the total may be very much greater. I should like to see them rotated.

Mr. BROOKS: Does the minister anticipate any objection from these men to returning overseas?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: No; I should say most of them will be anxious to go back. The old soldier follows the call, after he has had a bit of leave. My hon. friend has been through it, and so have I.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: I should like to ask the minister one question—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Cape Breton South has the floor.

Mr. GILLIS: I listened to the discussion all afternoon, and in my opinion the information we have received to-day has added very little to the knowledge of hon. members, although it has provided the Minister of National Defence with a good deal of mental exercise. As to this matter of reinforcements, and whether or not the order in council tabled to-day meets the situation, we are not in a position to say until we know exactly what the situation is in the various theatres of war. To what extent are our forces depleted? To what extent do they require immediate reinforcement? To what extent must we create reserves in order to support them up if and when they move forward? The minister is not in a position to give that information to hon. members, but I think we must have it.

Mr. MITCHELL: Not publicly.

Mr. GILLIS: That is so; not publicly. That is why I say most of the stuff we have been given to-day has given us no information whatever. I am not interested in finding out whether the minister can raise 16,000 men next month or the month after or the month after that. That may not be adequate. We have met here to make some definite and complete arrangements to see to it that our men overseas are reinforced adequately, and we cannot determine what is required until we have the information which the minister can give this house only in private session.

I am interested in one point, and that is how this matter came about. Why are we in this situation at the present time? We have had competent staffs. The war has been in progress for five years. Our troops sat in England for four years. As soon as they go into action we strike a crisis in the matter of reinforcements. Someone fell down on the job, and if that is so, then in my opinion the answer for the future is to correct that initial mistake.

I rose at this time for the purpose of asking the Minister of National Defence if he has any knowledge of a statement contained in the *Financial Post* of November 18, 1944. If this statement is correct it is a serious accusation against certain people in Canada responsible for the management of military affairs; if it is not accurate it should be denied. This statement deals specifically with the reinforcement situation; it is written by Kenneth R. Wilson, and I am going to read that part which is germane to this discussion:

It appears that the start of the crisis was a telegram from England to Canada early in August. This telegram expressed alarm at the shortage of infantry and urged that further steps be taken to increase the flow of trained infantry reinforcements to the European