

force can be shown to have a definite role, but the country is not sure. There is a great deal of criticism, perhaps misguided and erroneous, about the functions of the reserve army. Criticism is levelled against the reserve army as being the last line of defence in Canada. Criticism is levelled against the reserve army as being an expensive method of recruiting. Criticism is also levelled against it as being a morale building force.

There is probably a good answer to all these criticisms. I suggest that instead of going ahead with posters and other forms of advertising in an effort to have men join the reserve army, the minister should have published a small booklet outlining the role of the reserve army and answering all these questions. Many people criticize the reserve army because they do not know the real facts. I know in the Toronto district there was some difficulty in getting sufficient recruits for the reserve army. I do not know how successful the last recruiting drive was, but at one time it dragged considerably. In fairness to the reserve army some definite and concrete statement should be made as to its functions. Men are giving their time freely and with a great deal of keenness, and the reserve army is doing a great deal of good among the young men of sixteen and seventeen. They are learning about the army, getting instructions and the rudiments of discipline, being taught their way about, if nothing else. A lot can be said for it. I do not think it has been said. There is a great deal of groping in the dark as to the functions of the reserve army, and I suggest that the minister either make a statement at his convenience or else publish a small booklet setting forth clearly all the functions of the reserve army.

Mr. RALSTON: I took pains when I made my statement to the committee on May 18 to try to do exactly what my hon. friend has just suggested, and what I said will be found at pages 2771-72 of *Hansard*. No one values more than I do the opportunity not only to pay tribute to the reserve army but to indicate my belief in its usefulness. I emphasized then that the reserve army is, of course, a reserve army, but that its password must be preparedness; that is to say, to be ready. That is what the reserve army is for.

The functions which the reserve army fulfils are, I think, fairly definite. There is, first, the function of local or community defence and, second, the possible function of general defence. In addition to that, it does act as a body which impresses the citizens of Canada with the idea that this war is not won yet; that we cannot wait until the hun is on our

doorstep before we get ready to meet him. Members of the reserve army set a fine example by recognizing not only the opportunity but the obligation of Canadian citizens to devote some of their spare time and some of their comfort—and time and comfort are two solid commodities that are generally appreciated—to preparing themselves for an eventuality which may come. Everybody hopes it will not. Everybody hopes there will not be murders committed; yet no one suggests that we should not have a police force. Everybody hopes there will not be fires; but no one suggests that we should not have firefighters. They stand prepared, and the reserve army is for that very purpose.

I sympathize with the men of the reserve army and appreciate the steadfastness they are showing, day after day and night after night, working at their bench or in their office and, when the day's work is done, going out and drilling along with the boys and young men in order to be ready. I say they are doing a fine job for Canada. We must not forget that only six months ago did the tide apparently begin to turn. It was only six months ago that the British and United States forces landed in North Africa. Up to that time it was a pretty blue prospect. We are not out of the woods yet by any means, and there may be an opportunity and a necessity for the reserve army. That is exactly why we are taking all this time and spending all this money to assist them to be prepared. The pay and allowances are a fleabite so far as the individuals are concerned, but we are providing the reserve army with a lot of equipment. Some of that equipment can be made use of in other places; at the same time we are providing a reasonable amount in order that men may be trained. I have not been at a reserve army camp but, from what I have learned, the enthusiasm shown at these camps has been outstanding, even though the men who give their time to go may not see an opportunity to serve immediately ahead. They are there to get ready and to be ready. As I said the other day, I think the country owes them a great debt of gratitude and real appreciation for the way they have stood by Canada at this particular time. I do not know what more I can say than that. The same request has come to me from other quarters as came from my hon. friend to-night that I should go across Canada and speak to the reserve army. I wish I could, as I have said repeatedly to them, but it has often been charged that the minister goes into too many things. The best I can do is to make to the reserve army when I see them the kind of statement I have made to-night.