

Mr. GREEN: No, but you have said that the total number, over and above the previous commitments, that are to go over during these next few months is 16,000.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. GREEN: You said that these will not all be N.R.M.A. personnel; some will be G.S. personnel. Now can you tell us how many N.R.M.A. men are to go over? I ask you that question because the Prime Minister in his statement over the radio said that there are eight thousand fully trained N.R.M.A. men in Canada who presumably are trained and fit to walk on the boat to-morrow. He said there are another eight thousand men who could go over in a very short time. Now I should like to know how many of these N.R.M.A. men you intend to send overseas during these months you have mentioned.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: It is not possible to give an answer to the hon. member, because of this fact, that the shipping we shall have will be for 16,000; in the first instance those who volunteer for service will probably be selected, and we shall use the powers regarding these 16,000 N.R.M.A. men just to make good a deficiency. I want to say to hon. members right here, as I said in the formal address which I gave, that I am a confirmed believer in a system of voluntary service for the Canadian Army. In that, I make no invidious comparison with the customs and practices of other great nations who are allied with us. It happens that this system has been traditional, and hon. members of this house who were here of recent years will know the history of this question far better than I do. It has been traditional; it was the system we had in effect when I had the great honour and privilege of taking our first Canadian division overseas. The fact that our men were volunteers had a very material effect on the principles of organization and training and the development of leadership in the schools and all the way through. I am most reluctant to depart, in the Canadian Army, from that principle. I believe in the voluntary system. I have made a confession of faith in it for us and under our conditions, and I certainly am not the one to use compulsion any more than I can possibly avoid in order to make good the deficiency in the situation which otherwise would exist. I may be right or I may be wrong, but that is the view which I will implement to the limit of my capacity.

Mr. GREEN: Then the fact is that you intend to make up these 16,000 extra men as far as possible by sending general service personnel?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. GREEN: And you will send N.R.M.A. personnel only if other men cannot be scraped up from the bottom of the pool in Canada. Is that correct?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: That is not quite correct, sir.

Mr. GREEN: Then what is correct?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: What is correct is this: where we have general service personnel, N.R.M.A., who have converted, if they are entirely suitable and are up to the standards of training which we require of them—and that cannot be stated in simple terms across the whole business, because some of the training will take advantage of facilities. We shall have people at certain stages in Canada, and certain places, and as regards others we shall want to use our facilities in England for working out. As long as there are suitable general service personnel available to fill the requirements, it is our intention to use them. We propose to make good whatever deficiencies there are from N.R.M.A. personnel.

Mr. GREEN: So that the government's policy means this, that there may not be any N.R.M.A. personnel sent over at all between now and next May?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Perfectly correct—if there were, as I see signs developing already to indicate, a most satisfactory start in the conversion of N.R.M.A. men. We would not use this authority, then, in any way, and I would be the most thankful man in this room.

Mr. GREEN: N.R.M.A. men will not be sent overseas if you can possibly avoid it?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I have no intention of using compulsion except to meet a deficiency, and having regard to the purpose we have of maintaining the strength of our armies overseas.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Answer the question.

Mr. GREEN: General McNaughton, are you aware that general service men in the Pacific command are being transferred to infantry, for example, from the ordnance corps, who have had no military training at all, who were put on as clerks immediately they enlisted? They are now being transferred and rushed overseas and other men, for example, carpenters, are receiving the same treatment. Are you aware of these facts?