

3. INTEGRATION OF RESERVE AND ACTIVE UNITS IN CANADIAN ARMY, STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE, APRIL 8, 1941.

Some time ago, when the war appropriation bill was under discussion in committee, I made a statement with regard to the methods of enlistment, and I indicated at that time that I might take the opportunity to make a further statement. After that developed, questions were asked, and it seemed to me that the matter had been pretty carefully gone into and that a further statement was not necessary. I rise now only because of the fact that hon. members are going home for the Easter holiday and there was a report in the morning press with regard to a new plan respecting the integration of reserve and active units. I thought it might be due to the house and interesting to hon. members if I said just a word with regard to that matter and with regard to methods of enlistment.

The idea which seems to be abroad, that men are not needed for the army, is quite wrong. The fact that there has been so little pressure has helped, perhaps, to create that impression. As a matter of fact we have been enlisting an average of about 5,000 per month for the first three months of this year, and it is probable that between 5,000 and 6,000 will be needed each month under present conditions for the active army, to fill up and keep filled up and to reinforce the active units overseas and in Canada. The call has gone out for this month's quota. There will be room in practically every district for enlistment for all arms of the service. We look primarily to the reserve units to supply these men as their first duty. They can do their bit in no better way just now than in doing that, and it puts their training to practical use. Men not in the reserve units can enlist direct in the active army. All they have to do, as hon. members know, is to see or write to any recruiting officer.

Now I come to the plan. In connection with reserve units, we are endeavouring to see that local association is preserved, so that, as far as the needs of the service permit, men on active service will be with units from their own territory. In order to help obtain that objective a new plan has been worked out for "matching up", if I may use that expression, each unit of the reserve army with some unit of the active army from that same territory. That, we think, will help to foster the spirit of provincial and local pride and comradeship. We are thus trying to create a link between a reserve unit and an active unit so that the reserve unit in sending forward volunteers can feel that it has an associated unit as their definite destination. In this way, as hon. members will realize, the reserve unit will not have just the responsibility for furnishing reinforcements but it will have the credit and satisfaction of reinforcing its affiliated unit which represents it in the active army.