

*Reinforcements*

Mr. RALSTON: General, will you come back to the question I asked. The question I asked was whether or not the 16,000 plus the other dispatches which I have mentioned would see you through until May. You answered that these are only estimates. Of course, all these are estimates. But I ask you whether the 16,000 would see you through until May.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I can give no undertaking that it will. That is something which is beyond the knowledge of any person here or any place else. But these figures are the result of experience and knowledge of the rate at which troops can be moved; the probabilities based on experience of delays in shipping; the case of mumps which may hold back a whole group or may hold back only a few. All these have been taken into account and averaged out; and since we are dealing with very considerable numbers the statistical figures do have significance to guide us. Then we have our good staffs putting in, as all staffs do, a little cushion to be on the safe side.

Mr. RALSTON: I am asking you if, on that statistical position—I am using your word now—you anticipate on the estimates, rough though they may be and subject to contingencies, that the 16,000 plus these other dispatches will see you through to May? Will you have a surplus on hand at that time?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: What I would say is that the dispatches, planned as they are, and having regard to the time limits in the movements from this country to overseas, make it reasonably safe to hold that, if any extra incidents occur, we would have time to make them good.

Mr. RALSTON: But, on the figures which you have—I am not asking you the numbers—would you have any substantial surplus at the end of May, on the estimates that you have made?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: If everything went according to the figures the position would be satisfactory.

Mr. RALSTON: That means that you would have a substantial pool on hand?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: For the next month's casualties?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: And any more than the next month's.

[Mr. McNaughton.]

Mr. McNAUGHTON: In May we are going into the future beyond where the planned possibilities have been communicated to us. I have no doubt that in some sections of the supreme allied command plans have been made and figures are being prepared, but the time to carry them to us has not yet come.

Mr. RALSTON: And, with that 16,000 and the others, you would have a substantial pool in all three bases: that is to say, the main pool in the United Kingdom, the pool in the battle area in northwest Europe, which we hope will be Germany, and another pool in the Mediterranean?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: The answer is yes.

Mr. RALSTON: Substantial?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: Now then, without the 16,000 what would your position be? If you did not get the 16,000 in December, January and February would you be—shall I say—on the estimates, going into the red?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I would say, far more than going into the red—quite deep.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is frank, anyway.

Mr. GREEN: General McNaughton, the order in council which has been tabled to-day limits the number of N.R.M.A. personnel that may be sent over to 16,000; and you have just told Colonel Ralston that, of the 16,000 extra men who will go over in December, January and from then until May, some will be general service personnel and some will be N.R.M.A. men. Can you give us any idea of approximately how many will be N.R.M.A. men and how many will be general service personnel?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I would say to the hon. member that I think the best way I can answer the first part is by reading the operative clause of the order in council itself. It is restricted, as you know, to the operational theatres in the European or Mediterranean war zones, and the United Kingdom, of course, which is on our lines of communication; and it states that the minister is—

... hereby authorized and directed to dispatch to the following localities of service, namely: the United Kingdom and/or to European and/or Mediterranean operational theatres such personnel, in such numbers as may be approved by the governor in council (the number hereby approved being 16,000) who are serving by reason of their having been called out for training—

And so on. The order in council is general in its character, but the particular authority it has vested in me is sixteen thousand of the N.R.M.A.