

Supply—National Defence

I have already referred to the example of the inefficiency which was necessarily inherent in the sudden, rushed and unscientific recruitment for the Korean brigade. Let me make it perfectly clear that I believe absolutely, and I am happy to believe, that the Korean brigade as it finally sailed for Korea was among the most efficient and most splendid, if not the most efficient and splendid that had ever been raised in this country—but at what a tremendous cost, in the matter of weeding out men who should never have been allowed to join it in the first place, as the result of a haphazard program of recruitment!

As I have said, these men are being asked to face the possibility of imminent war in Europe. I do not consider the method being followed of raising the brigade is the fair, the safe or the efficient way. Then, apart from that question, there are one or two other features of the present method of recruiting the brigade for Europe which, I suggest, should be examined. I realize it was extremely difficult to find a satisfactory compromise between the various factors the minister outlined for us when he announced the method to be followed in recruiting that brigade, having as a basis the reserve units across the country. He said we had to have a compromise between choosing three main units only and getting proper geographic representation. Those were among the factors considered.

The decision was arrived at to raise three battalions, one of which would be a highland battalion, one a straight infantry battalion and one a rifle battalion, and to give fifteen various reserve units the opportunity to recruit men for that brigade. As I understood the minister's statement, one of the advantages which were to flow from this method was the preservation of the regimental spirit—an objective with which I agree one hundred per cent.

But I think we should consider seriously whether in fact the method being followed will not actually defeat the objective. I wonder if it is going to be possible, when we have five different companies in a battalion wearing, as I understand they will wear, different regimental insignia. That is to say, a company of the Canadian Highland Regiment recruited by the Seaforth Highlanders would wear insignia different from a company recruited from the Canadian Scottish—that was my understanding, and I would ask the minister to correct me if I am wrong.

Mr. Claxton: Shoulder badges.

Mr. Fulton: Different shoulder badges—it does seem to me it will be very difficult

[Mr. Fulton.]

when there are companies within a unit competing, as it were, on the basis of prior regimental affiliations, to build up a unit spirit, such as our whole Canadian army tradition has shown is so important and counts for so much in the winning of battles. Because not only will companies now have that proper spirit of competition and rivalry based upon a competitive spirit as between, let us say, A company and B company, but there will be the other aspect introduced when it will be pointed out that A company used to be a company of Seaforth Highlanders whereas B company was Canadian Scottish.

Then there is the problem of transferring from one company to another within the same unit. The person involved would have to take down one set of shoulder flashes and put up another. It seems to me this would create a situation wherein the unit commander would find it exceedingly difficult to build up a proper unit spirit.

Then in addition we have the condition the minister outlined whereby other reserve force units will be asked to recruit reinforcement companies for the brigade, thus, as I understood him, further achieving the desired objective of maintaining the unit spirit and the regimental tradition. Again I believe the practice will defeat the objective. Because it seems to me that with a company of reinforcements raised by a battalion which is not a component company of the initial battalion of the brigade, and presumably wearing the shoulder flashes and the regimental insignia of their own unit during the time of their formation, coming into the battalion of the brigade and having to join companies with shoulder flashes different from that of the parent battalion of the reinforcement company, chaos and confusion would result, as well as a distinct feeling of let-down by the men, when they came in as members of X regiment and were then sent to one of the companies of the particular regiment and had to put up some other type of insignia.

The Chairman: The hon. member has exhausted his time.

Mr. Fulton: It seems to me that this problem may well create a situation where the unit commander may find he cannot allow this form of affiliation to exist, and he may have to say, "You will now regard yourselves as members of the first Canadian infantry battalion"—the first "Canadian infantry battalion" we have had in the history of the Canadian army. So that the very thing you are trying to preserve, under the system which has been adopted, may make it essential to disregard and to discard all unit