

*Reinforcements*

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): My next question is somewhat different. We note that some 450 men who have given long service overseas are to be returned for a thirty-day leave; will they be permitted to bring back to Canada with them the families they have acquired while they have been serving overseas?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: If they have families I would think that the men would be keen to spend the leave with their families.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): A man may have married while overseas and his parents may be in Canada. Will he be permitted to spend his leave in Canada and bring his wife with him?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I would say, no, because the whole limit on the business is the amount of transportation available.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): There is one point that was not made clear. I think the minister said, in correcting a statement made by one hon. member, that the training necessary before an infantry man was ready for the line occupied twelve weeks, and that was corrected to sixteen weeks. Which is the correct figure?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: In the infantry he would get eight weeks basic training and eight weeks in advanced corps training. That would make sixteen weeks in Canada normally. Then he would have refresher training, which would take at least two weeks.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Was it not twenty-three weeks at one time?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: No.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I understood that it was twenty-three weeks.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Have you in mind trade training?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That may be.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): What age must a boy be before he is permitted to go into the front line?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: The age is nineteen, and there we always get into certain trouble because many boys who want to go forward exaggerate their age. That is constantly occurring.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): The minister asked that any cases which came to our notice of boys who had not reached the minimum age should be handed over to him. I should like to hand this letter over to the minister.

[Mr. McNaughton.]

Mr. WHITE: This afternoon when the general was giving certain answers to the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) I understood him to say that on the first occasion when he interviewed the Prime Minister, namely, on October 31, 1944, he did not have full information or full figures, or representations to that effect. Would the general please explain just what information he did have before him on that occasion when he advised the Prime Minister, as stated in the letter of November 3 from the Prime Minister to Colonel J. L. Ralston, in which the Prime Minister says:

I felt it necessary to ascertain the views of General McNaughton. This I did, and ascertained that General McNaughton was not satisfied that compulsory service was necessary to provide full support for the army overseas.

Will the general please tell the house what information he had before him as to the military situation on that occasion, bearing in mind what he has already said to the hon. member for Lake Centre?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I think that is a question I am not required to answer.

Mr. WHITE: I think you have answered it by telling the hon. member for Lake Centre that you did not have all the information before you. Is that correct?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I had sufficient information to form my opinion, and it was on my opinion that I took action.

Mr. WHITE: Am I correct in assuming that the answer you gave to the member for Lake Centre was correct when you stated that you did not have full information before you?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I have stated again and again that I gave my opinion. There was never a time when anybody had all the information before him; that is impossible.

Mr. WHITE: But am I correct in assuming that on October 31 in your interview with the Prime Minister you did have the information as to the required number of reinforcements going through the reinforcement stream each month, that you had knowledge of these required 16,000 that are to be sent over in December, January and the next three months? Did you have knowledge of these requirements on that occasion?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I had sufficient general information to form the opinion which I expressed.

Mr. WHITE: That is not my question. I am asking you if on October 31 in your interview with the Prime Minister you had