

*War Appropriation*

denial, and said that all the reinforcements requested by the corps commander had been supplied.

In the blue book of April, 1942, at page 14, it is stated that there are approximately 300,000 men in the active army, approximately half of whom are outside the country. If that statement is correct—and I believe it is—there would be in Canada somewhere around 150,000 men who have enlisted in the active forces and who are available to be sent overseas. Within the last two months I believe that a request has been made for a large number of reinforcements to proceed overseas. Could the minister tell the committee if the department was able to fill the quota, because I understand that the number asked for was not sent? I believe that in order to send as many as possible, training centres, district headquarters and other headquarters were cleaned out of men who were stenographers, clerks, storemen or men holding positions of that kind, who, because of their enlistment in the active force, had to proceed on draft.

I realize it is difficult to ask the minister to give actual numbers, but I think the committee should have some information as to whether or not there are sufficient trained active force men in Canada to make up any quota that might be required for overseas service. Perhaps the minister would also tell the committee if in his opinion and in the opinion of his staff officers there are to-day in England, either with the units or with the holding companies, sufficient reinforcements to guard against any emergency that might arise.

The minister has stated the new recruit requirements necessary for the present year for both active and reserve armies. In regard to the men required for the active army in the present year would the minister tell the committee the method by which the quota is established for each district. I understand that in the past the quota has been based upon the population of the district or upon the strength of the reserve army in the military district or upon the basis of voluntary enlistments in the past. Perhaps the minister can tell the committee later on just what he has in mind in setting the quota for each military district for men for the active force.

In regard to the number of men needed for the reserve army, which I understand will be some 50,000, and who are called out under the National Resources Mobilization Act, would the minister tell the committee what he proposes to do after the men in the age limit up to thirty years are exhausted? Is it the intention to extend the age limit to thirty-five years, or is it the intention to call married men up to thirty years who have no children?

[Mr. White.]

In regard to men called up for the reserve forces, I wonder whether this matter has been brought to the attention of the minister. After these men finish their training at the advanced training centres and are allotted to units, in many instances they are not allotted to units from the province in which they resided prior to enlistment.

Mr. RALSTON: Is that overseas?

Mr. WHITE: No, I am referring to the men in the reserve army. For instance, I understand there is a regiment in northern Ontario which has attached to it some 300 men from another province. I realize that it is sometimes difficult to attach men to units from their own province; but with Canada stretching over several thousand miles of territory and the present strain upon our transportation facilities, I submit that if troops were attached to units in their own province, not only would the transportation situation be improved but a great deal of the agitation and deputations and representations made to the minister for free transportation or further reduced fares would be done away with.

I should also like to bring to the minister's attention the case of boys who are to-day under seventeen and eighteen years of age. I understand that they cannot enlist in the active forces, and that under the restricted employment order the selective service officer cannot give these boys a permit to work in restricted trades. This works a distinct hardship upon boys who are unfortunate enough to be around seventeen and eighteen. If they cannot be accepted into the active army I think it is only fair that they should be given every opportunity to do war work or anything else. I do not want to suggest to the minister that the present regulations are a method of forcing them into the army—

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend is speaking of boys of seventeen and eighteen?

Mr. WHITE: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: Was my hon. friend right when he said that the selective service officer cannot give a permit to boys of seventeen to work in restricted trades?

Mr. WHITE: That is what I understand.

Mr. HOMUTH: Boys seventeen and over.

Mr. WHITE: Yes, and I understood the minister to say that a lad could not join the army until he was eighteen and a half years of age.

Mr. RALSTON: He can enlist at eighteen for trade training.