

*Reinforcements*

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): If he does not do so, then what?

Mr. GREEN: I suppose there is no obligation on the government to send him over!

Under this proposed plan there will be two types of Canadian soldier, one who fights and one who does not fight.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: That is a statement of fact; I am not sure whether it is a question.

Mr. GREEN: I will put it as a question. Under your present policy will it be a fact that there will be two types of Canadian soldier, one who fights and one who does not?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I sincerely trust that these young men will come forward to take up their obligations. I am doing everything I can to persuade them to do so.

Mr. GREEN: I understood you to say in your statement that you had reached the conclusion that it is impossible to persuade these young men to come forward.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I said that under the circumstances as they exist at the moment there are not enough men with the requisite background of training coming forward to provide the essential reserves needed for our army overseas. For that reason, and for that reason only, I have been vested with authority, which I shall use, to see that the army is kept up. May I say that the organization in Canada is separate and distinct from the keeping up of our army overseas.

Mr. GREEN: But it is important.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I agree.

Mr. GREEN: The lives of young Canadians are at stake.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: No one agrees more profoundly with what you have stated than I. One of the most difficult problems which faces me in the Department of National Defence is not the business of getting men to volunteer for service overseas, because once the unity and the will of the people of this country are established that will occur of itself. I have been given the residual problem of the N.R.M.A. personnel in the camps. Even with the most honest searching of our hearts as to how to go about it, we really do not yet know how to handle it. We have to study and investigate; we have to be sympathetic; we have to be human about it. We will find the answer, although I have not it yet to give you.

Mr. GREEN: Do you think you will promote unity by this policy of yours?

[Mr. McNaughton.]

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): To support the soldiers overseas?

Mr. GREEN: Mine is a fair question. Do you think you will promote unity by this policy of yours?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: My primary responsibility to this house is the maintenance of the army overseas. I try in my humble way to put first things first. My business is to look after the army, and that I will do. May I say to the hon. member that if we do that and do it right, a lot of fine consequences will follow and we shall not have to worry about the unity of Canada.

Mr. GREEN: That is all very nice, but you have not answered the question.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): This is on a high plane.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member for Vancouver Centre need not talk about things being on a high plane. Is your plan to continue asking N.R.M.A. men to volunteer for general service?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. GREEN: You propose to carry on in Canada the two systems, general service and N.R.M.A.; is that correct?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I want to phrase my answer in words that are understandable. The policy is to have voluntary service, and there will be an extension of that principle only where it is necessary to meet deficiencies in our army overseas.

Mr. GREEN: But the two methods will still be carried on?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: We have a problem on our hands. We have 60,000 men in the N.R.M.A. They are there physically in existence and something has to be done about them. The system must continue until it is liquidated, either by the men volunteering for service or by their going into some other form of activity. You cannot change an organization with 60,000 men in it just overnight.

Mr. GREEN: What about the young lads you are going to call up from now on? Are you going to continue calling up men and then asking them to volunteer? Are the men who are to be called up to be for service anywhere, or are they simply to go into the N.R.M.A. in Canada and then have to be persuaded to go active?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: There has been no alteration in the call-up system. Under that system we forecast the activities and needs