

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I have the privilege of asking the minister a question in order to clear up more precisely what is meant when we talk about men being taken from the N.R.M.A. to be sent overseas. Let me put it to the house in a simple way. Assume that to-day, November 23, there are a thousand N.R.M.A. men in a certain camp. Then take the situation as it may exist a week from to-day with those same men. Assume that none of those men have volunteered in the meantime. The result will be that they will remain N.R.M.A. men just as they are to-day. But if in the period of that week the thousand men volunteer, they then are no longer classed as N.R.M.A. men, they become general service men—I am asking if I am right in this—if these general service men in a week from to-day were sent overseas the public might assume that they are other than the N.R.M.A. men of to-day. But they would not be, they would be exactly the same men. The only difference would be that they would be going as general service men instead of being N.R.M.A. personnel sent under compulsion and not thought of as general service in the sense in which most persons use that term to-day. Am I right in that?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: That is correct.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Here is something that is bound to cause confusion in the minds of many. I know there was confusion in my own mind in some instances cited of general service other than N.R.M.A. personnel going overseas. When we begin to consider whether these N.R.M.A. men are going over as general service men—

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Let us send them all over.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Supposing all the men in the camp volunteered before the commanding officer detailed them—they have that privilege—they would then go as general service men, they would be volunteers but they would all be the N.R.M.A. men of to-day many of whom have been in camp for years. It is important to have that perfectly clear in our minds. As I understand it, any N.R.M.A. man in a camp is free to volunteer up to the moment his commanding officer details him to go; is that right?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: That is correct.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Up to the present time something like 42,000 N.R.M.A. men have become general service men through voluntary enlistment. Those men had been in the camps for some time and most of them were highly trained.

Mr. ADAMSON: If those thousand men refused to volunteer and were called up under the order in council, they would then become general service men.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Certainly.

Mr. ADAMSON: It is exactly the same thing; once they go up for active service they are general service men whether they are called up or whether they volunteer. There is no difference.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The difference is that the one is a volunteer and the other is not; that is the distinction.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): I should like to ask the minister one or two questions. First as to general service personnel who have been in the army for some time but have had practically no infantry training, are they being sent overseas to reinforce units that require trained infantry men?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: On occasion that may well happen. They would have to have the physical characteristics laid down for the infantry and be within the age limits. They would be selected for remustering and put through courses of training.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): Put through courses of training in Canada?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: If they were here it would probably be done in Canada. On occasion we have sent certain personnel for remustering across to England to take advantage of the training facilities there. It would be either one or the other.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): What training will they receive? Will it be eight or ten or twelve weeks?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: If they have already done the full basic training of their own arm, they will get six weeks' training. Otherwise it would be longer.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): Will general service men fitted for their present service but not fitted for infantry service have an opportunity to appear again before a medical officer to make certain they are fit for infantry service?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes, that is so.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): Will it be necessary for the individual general service man to request this, or will it be done as part of the routine of the service before these men are dispatched overseas?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Part of the routine.