

*Reinforcements*

Mr. McNAUGHTON: But from the table they could draw general conclusions which could be used outside without using the specific figures. I would like to say also that these figures are unstable, if I can use that word, in that they are susceptible to many minor factors that enter into the matter from day to day.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): They are really only an estimate?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: They are simply an estimate based on experience, with a factor of safety provided to be on the safe side.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Of necessity they must be an estimate.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: They must be, because the effects of battle are uncertain.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): There are so many unknown factors?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The loss of a troopship, for instance?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: Then on the ground of security you prefer not to give us what the pool was, say a couple of months back, and what number of months of intense activity was estimated in planning it. Could we have that information as of September 30?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I am not familiar with parliamentary procedure.

Mr. RALSTON: It is new to me.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I think the information the hon. member wants is a comparison of the reserves that are now in the plan with the reserves of some months ago?

Mr. RALSTON: What I really wanted to get was the number of the reserves or the number which should have been in the pool according to whatever formula was laid down, say on September 30, both in Italy and in northwest Europe, and also the number which were actually there at that time.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): To show the deficiency.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I must say frankly to the house that a person skilled in the art of debate might be able to give information of the sort that Colonel Ralston is asking for in open session and safeguard his tongue, but I have not such skill in that matter that I would care to take the responsibility. I have the figures under my hand; I see the way they are calculated, and I would rather not be pressed to give them.

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

Mr. RALSTON: Thank you. But you will not mind my making this remark. In the statement that you made I thought all the skill that could possibly be brought to bear was used in the way you worded your address. You said: "All anxiety would be removed" if we were able to find in December so and so. That was as skilful a use of words I thought as could possibly be made. In another case you said the infantry reserves "might become low". What "low" means I do not know. I suppose you do not want to go any farther than that? I have done the same thing. But I do not want to have bouquets heaped on me for debating skill because I think the general is proving himself pretty apt.

May I ask another question. You spoke about 5,000 needed to be in the United Kingdom in December.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: No. I was saying we would like to ship during the month of December another 5,000; another 5,000 in January, and another 6,000 distributed over the months which follow. It is quite possible that these figures would have to be adjusted to fit in with shipping available. There is a margin one way or the other. You cannot in these things paint with a fine brush. You have to treat them generally.

Mr. RALSTON: The 5,000, and the 5,000, and the 6,000 are in addition to all the supplies of general service personnel available?

Mr. SPEAKER: While this meeting of the house is informal to a large extent it should not be so informal that those in the house cannot hear, and this will apply to the galleries as well as to the house. I would ask those behind the curtains for silence because it is not possible otherwise for the house to hear.

Mr. GRAYDON: Mr. Speaker, may I also suggest that the press here has quite a responsibility, and I am quite sure that it must be very difficult for them to hear some of the remarks made by the minister and by the hon. member for Prince. I think I need only bring that to their attention to have them speak a little louder.

Mr. RALSTON: I was asking whether or not the 16,000, which is the combined figure for December, January and February, of dispatches which you desire to make is in addition to supplies of general service personnel whom you planned to dispatch in any case?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Yes, sir.