

echelons in infantry battalions, or armoured regiments until they have spent a minimum of forty-eight hours in the LOB "school". I stress forty-eight hours as the minimum. Four or five days is preferable, whenever operational circumstances allow.

7. Whilst during prolonged active periods, the urge may be very strong to bring up to strength depleted fighting echelons as soon as a draft of reinforcements arrives, I am convinced that if the steps are taken, which I have outlined above, a far greater fighting value will accrue to the unit and casualties will be fewer.

8. I fully appreciate that during the period of intensive activities through which we have been going that commanding officers have had little time to think about things other than the battle in which they are engaged. But, once proper arrangements have been made for reinforcement absorption, and a "unit reception school" formed, the senior LOB officer can command it.

Mr. GREEN: You are relying a good deal on these young lads who have had six or six and a half weeks' training in England getting at least forty-eight hours' training when they get to their battalions?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I am relying much more than that on the testing by the officers as the men come up through the various echelons checking on the standards of qualifications which are required and physical fitness and so on. All of these echelons have authority to hold back in the training stream or in the depots people whom they consider to be unfit. I am satisfied, too, as matters have progressed, that we have a comprehensive number of officers and N.C.O.'s who have very great experience and who have been placed in these key positions where they can check the training and ensure the adequacy of people who are passing through their hands.

May I say one thing further? One of the things that I was always interested in and one of the things which relieved me most was to find, when I came to the department and asked what was being done with left-out-of-battle personnel, this information. I was relieved when the staff turned me up a copy of this letter from one of our senior commanders. I said: "At last we have this thing under control with the units themselves in place of having it left to chance." Once we have it checked at that point by the people who have to use and be responsible for the lives of these young men, they will very quickly bring the echelons up to standard, if they have been falling down. I was relieved to find that letter given as an order by one of our senior commanders in the field.

Mr. GREEN: In any event you are placing a good deal of reliance on the training that these young boys will get when they reach the battalion. What is to happen in the case of a

boy going up to the Seaforth Highlanders of Vancouver as an example and meeting a condition where that unit has been reduced to fifty or a hundred men, and they are in desperate straits to hold their part of the front? How much training do you think that boy will get under those conditions—and some of us as infantrymen saw that happen in the last war—

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Quite so.

Mr. GREEN: Actually what will happen, as you know, will be that that boy will be put right in the line, and the chances are that he will be killed or wounded within twenty-four hours. If he is lucky enough to live he may learn something. We have had men back from the Seaforths, and that is exactly what has been happening in Italy. What do you do in a case like that?

Mr. POULIOT: Before the general answers may I say I submit that he is not a witness in court. He should sit down while such questions are being asked.

Mr. GREEN: What chance do you think a boy has to get training in the unit in circumstances like that?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: The hon. member has described a specific case.

Mr. GREEN: I am sure that there are many of them.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: It is a case where one of our battalions in an attack has been reduced to a strength of fifty all ranks.

Mr. GREEN: Or one hundred.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: If the circumstances of battle permitted, what would happen there is that the unit would be withdrawn.

Mr. GREEN: Suppose it is not withdrawn?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Some of us have been in like positions; no doubt you have; I have been myself. Under those conditions, when the fate of the battle depends on it, it is the duty of every man, regardless of his qualifications or training, to do the best he can.

Mr. GREEN: Government members are applauding. What does the general think the duty of the men who are in the home defence army fully trained in combat training should be?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: The duty of the man in the home defence army is that he should take up his honourable obligation of service, and take it up at once, as other Canadians are doing.