

*Reinforcements*

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Are Canadian forces being reinforced by nationals other than Canadians?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: No, and they never have been.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): These are matters the public are concerned about, and I think they should be cleared up.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: If the hon. member would like me to give some further explanation I shall be glad to do so. The Canadian army overseas, which is now commanded by General Crerar, is made up of a Canadian corps and a number of Canadian divisions. In that army there is one British corps and possibly more, and they have their own British divisions. Then there are Polish divisions as well as other divisions which go to make up that first army. That army is made up of units and formations from other commonwealths in addition to our own units. Each of those commonwealths has its own reinforcement stream to replace its own casualties. Canada reinforces her own and always has.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): The Canadian units are reinforced entirely by our own men?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Absolutely, and always have been.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): There has been a lot of discussion about that point.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I was so much concerned about this the other day that I asked our public relations officer to issue a press statement which would be generally descriptive of what was going on and which would be purely for public information.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): You have been referred to by the Prime Minister as the builder and the first commander of the Canadian army.

Mr. McNAUGHTON: I was the first commander of the first Canadian army.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): You never had any doubt at any time that the army was over-expanded and that there would be any difficulty in reinforcing it?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: The army was designed on the basis of enduring in a war of long duration.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): There has been considerable discussion to-day about reinforcement pools overseas. I would have judged from past experience that one of the best methods of reinforcement would have been to use what might be termed ad hoc troops,

[Mr. McNaughton.]

for instance, pioneer troops, forestry troops, and so on. Can you give us the percentage of reinforcements overseas that would be composed of those troops?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Again I must say that I am not skilful in deciding what figures should be given out and what should not be given out. Would it be possible for me to give that information when I give the other figures?

Mr. ROSS (Souris): That will be satisfactory, although you might be able to give it approximately. If those pioneer troops were remustered, how long would it take to train them properly as infantry ready to go into action?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: They would never be up to the infantry level because they are in the pioneers owing to their being low in certain pulhems figures.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): What about the forestry?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: In the early part of the war the Canadian forestry corps included a great many who were eventually transferred to the infantry.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Are there any there now?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: Only a comparatively small number. Most of the Scottish woods have been cut down. There are some forestry people with the expeditionary force on the continent.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): How long would it take to train those men?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: As a matter of fact the forestry corps in Scotland formed an important part of the defence of Britain in the early days when we had not an adequate number of troops. General Thorne, the G.O.C., Scottish command, had a high regard for our forestry people. He helped tremendously in giving them a skilled training and they were really very well trained as infantry. They were a fine body of troops.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): There has been considerable discussion to-day about the 16,000 men who will be called up under the new conscription policy which has been announced. In choosing those men or any proportion of them, will it be done on a per capita basis in the military districts across Canada from which they originally enlisted?

Mr. McNAUGHTON: No; they will just be taken from any part of Canada.