

Supply—National Defence

are many other things that I might have discussed, but I do not want to take further time of the committee, because I know the minister wants to reply. I hope he will accede to the setting up of this committee, which is so very important from all angles to the people of this nation during these difficult and distressing times. I hope the minister will give fair consideration to these requests that I have made, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Brooks: Mr. Chairman, I had not intended to make any remarks in this debate but I am rather inspired to do so by a remark that was made by the minister this afternoon to the effect that a unit which has its headquarters in my town in the province of New Brunswick was the first unit in Canada to complete its complement with regard to recruiting.

Mr. Claxton: I did not say that. I do not know that yet. I just said it had completed it on the first day.

Mr. Brooks: If it completed it on the first day, I think the minister can rest assured that it will continue to complete it and will be ahead on the last day.

As I say, we are proud indeed of that accomplishment. I might also point out that we in New Brunswick are proud of both the units that have been chosen or selected by the minister for this special brigade. We would also have been proud if the other units in that province had been chosen, because our reserve units in New Brunswick have always done well. Not only in this war but in previous wars they have always maintained their record with regard to numbers in recruiting. I think this is a significant fact. I do not think it is because we in New Brunswick are more patriotic than are the people in any other part of Canada; but there is another factor which also helps recruiting in our province, namely the fact that our people in that section of the dominion have not the large amount of employment which is enjoyed in other parts of Canada. I am not saying that this is the prime reason why the people of New Brunswick are the first to fill their units; but in the past it has been one of the reasons. I should like to say to the minister and to the cabinet that I hope we shall not only be the first in filling the units, having regard to recruiting, but that we also shall be given the opportunity of being the first in providing war materials and other necessities.

I remember that in the first war Colonel Fowler raised, in my province, two regiments inside a month. In the last war there was a unit which went to Hong Kong. When it was given orders to prepare to go to Hong Kong, it had not more than 50 per cent of the men

[Mr. Ross (Souris).]

required. The men could not be recruited in their own recruiting section, and these men were recruited from New Brunswick. One reason for that was that, in the section in which this unit should have recruited, there was so much employment that they could not get the necessary recruits and had to get them from the province of New Brunswick.

If a war occurs we shall have to raise hundreds of thousands of men, as we did in the past two wars. It is possibly not necessary now; but if it becomes necessary to raise large numbers of men, as it was in previous wars, we shall have to adopt some other system of providing men than that by which they have been provided in the past; because the system which we have had does not bear fairly upon sections such as the one from which I come.

I was not here tonight, Mr. Chairman, when this debate arose with regard to Colonel Ralston. I do not intend to make any derogatory remarks about anyone. I did, however, know Colonel Ralston. I come from the maritime provinces, as did Colonel Ralston; and may I say that there is no man at present or in the past whose name stands higher in the maritime provinces than does that of Colonel Ralston. He was a great soldier and a great Canadian. I had the opportunity of serving under him in the city of Fredericton—in a camp there—and also in Windsor, Nova Scotia. I received much help from him.

The great crime which Colonel Ralston committed, if he committed any crime in the eyes of the people of Canada, was this. In the latter part of the war, when he knew that there was a great scarcity of men overseas, he asked for men in Canada. He knew that there were in this country thousands of well-trained men who could have gone overseas to assist the men fighting in Europe at that time. But instead of getting the men that he required, as he expected, he came to my camp and he went to camps in other parts of this dominion, and had to take cooks, clerks and hundreds of other men who were poorly trained instead of the men whom he had hoped to get, namely the well-trained men throughout Canada. If any crime was committed by Colonel Ralston, I say that was it; and I think it is one that every fair-minded man and woman in Canada will say that he was justified in committing.

It is not my intention to say anything more tonight, Mr. Chairman. I deeply regret that the name of a great man and a great Canadian should have been brought into this debate tonight as it has been, and that the debate should have been conducted in such a manner as it has been conducted tonight.