

that you proposed to place in uniform at that time could not be expected very readily to volunteer for military service, and I think the government took the proper attitude in approaching that very cautiously, to avoid a revolution. You had a disinherited, disfranchised generation that were on the rods from coast to coast, without a means of livelihood for the twenty years between the two wars, and were you to have approached them when this war broke out with a mandate that you were to requisition them for military service and send them overseas, you would not have had the military organization which you have in Canada to-day on a voluntary basis.

Second, anyone who looked at the problem realistically must have recognized that Canada was completely unorganized in every phase of war. The industrial machine was functioning at just about ten per cent. When war finally broke out, in view of the position which Britain and other countries close to the scene of war were in, it was recognized by General McNaughton and others who viewed the matter realistically that Canada's position would be one of producing machines, munitions, ships and other requirements for war purposes. While he was in Canada in 1941, General McNaughton clearly stated through the public press that the main emphasis as far as Canada is concerned should be placed on the production of machines of war, not the sending overseas of half-fed and half-trained men to be placed in a position where it was difficult either to feed or to train them. This is where the training job should be done.

With respect to the trainees who are in Canada at the present time, many demand that they should be conscripted and sent overseas. I do not believe that if the Canadian army goes into action, there will be any difficulty in having at least ninety per cent of the men now in the army in Canada on that basis, cross the sea and join in the battle with their friends, relatives and neighbours who at present are in England. To-day units are applying to be moved en bloc. I can mention units on the east coast that are in that category. They have done jobs on isolated posts and been in a much tougher position than are the fellows in the old country, and they are anxious to get away. They trained together; they want to move together, but they are being kept here year after year. I completely discount the argument which is advanced that these men will have to be moved by force. I do not think those who suggest that have any knowledge of the boys.

They will go when they are needed, and I do not think that up to the present time they have been needed in England.

Mr. STIRLING: Does the hon. member mean units composed of our home defence recruits?

Mr. GILLIS: Yes, I do. To date they have not been needed in England. Moreover, there are now more there than we can feed. I think that is generally recognized by the boys who are remaining here. They perform the same service in Canada as waiting around in England. The time will come when they will move, and move voluntarily for the most part. I have not much doubt about that.

I have not much patience with the man who rises in his place in this chamber and takes the position that everyone should be in a uniform, that there should be conscription of man-power for military purposes and military purposes only. It is easy to be an armchair general back here in Canada and be willing to fight until the last farmer or the last worker in this and other countries is dying on battlefields across the ocean. I do not mind that contention when it comes from men who have already made their contribution on some battlefield in the past. But I think it is ill-advised on the part of those who have had a nice comfortable living during the years of poverty and frustration of the generation that to-day has to fight a second war, and some of whom have already made their contribution in blood on the battlefields of Europe, in order that those who are comfortably off may retain that comfortable position in Canada, and they are not prepared to make very many sacrifices. I think it is uncalled for and totally unbecoming for the hon. member for York-Sunbury to occupy the amount of time in the house that he occupies telling you and me that your son and my son and someone else's son should be conscripted in order that people of that calibre may live the kind of life that they have, as contrasted with what the average worker in this country has had during the past twenty-five years after doing the job that he advocates the workers should be compelled to do again.

I make these remarks because I think the hon. member goes out of his way, every time he rises, to attempt to discredit members of this group. Make no mistake about it, although this group is small, thirty-three per cent of its members have already made their contributions on the battlefields of Europe, and perhaps would do it again quite willingly if they were not in the position they are in now.