



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA'S RESERVE ARMY

An address by Hon. Brooke Claxton,  
Minister of National Defence, at  
the Annual Dinner of the Governor  
General's Foot Guards, at Ottawa  
on September 11, 1948.

From the earliest days the people of what is now Canada looked for their defence largely to voluntary citizen forces. Under the French regime companies of militia were embodied to defend the settlers' homes alike against Indians and English. After the Cession in 1760 a large number of the officers and men who served with Wolfe settled in Canada - you will still find Warrens and Wilsons, Murrays, Mackays and Frasers speaking French on both banks of the St. Lawrence. The early soldier settlers and others who came here from the British Isles gave our early settlements a military background. It was natural that this soil should produce local companies of volunteers which became the ancestors of the regiments which have brought fame to themselves and glory to Canada.

The character of Canada's armed forces was determined by the geographical situation of our country. Canada was favoured above almost every other country. We had plenty of land so we have no aggressive designs on anyone. We had plenty to do and so we did not have to work off our aggressive instincts in seeking more power. We had comfortable boundaries of long stretches of sea to the west and east, the friendly Eskimo to the north and the friendly American to the south. No country could have or has had less aggressive instincts, desires or ambitions.

While we did not need a large standing army - that would have been completely unthinkable - we did feel that we should have militia forces with the minimum of regulars required to train and administer those forces.

In the First Great War Canada's armed forces earned a name second to none. Canada's forces in that war were organized on the basis of the militia units. After the war there was a great falling off in militia interest, support and activity. I was in the militia at the time and I can remember how difficult were the conditions of work and service. It was not until we got along in the thirties and the international situation had greatly deteriorated that serious attention was given to the work of preparation. Preparedness was accelerated in the years just before the Second World War with the result that when it did come upon us most of the units then in the Non-Permanent Active Militia, as it was then called, were in pretty good shape. Many of them

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were called out on active service in anticipation or upon the outbreak of war. These units were the framework on which it was possible to organize for defence of Canada against sabotage from within and for the defence of Canada against attack from without by assisting in the defeat of the common enemy just as far away as possible from our shores.

In both wars, as in South Africa, the men of this famous unit played their proper part.

I am sure that many of you who served in the Second World War often felt that the happiest day of your lives would be the day when you flung off your uniform and you thought you had taken it off then for the last time. This was a natural feeling, for you had played your part; you had brought victory to our side; you had earned the right to enjoy the peace you thought your victory had won.

Unfortunately victory has not brought peace. Here let me say, however, that this does not mean that anyone died or fought in vain. Let no one ever say that. Victory is an end in itself. You played your part to keep Canada free and to give the world a chance to be free.

The battle honours of Canada and of your regiment have been embellished by the names of Caen and Falaise. The bombed houses, the piles of rubble still standing in the streets, the broken bridges, the tanks and guns and motor vehicles by the hundred strewn along the roadside, all the wrack of war, I saw there two years after you had been there, showed what you had gone through. Two years ago today I had lunch in Caen and dinner in Falaise.

The people told me what they had gone through. The people of Normandy lined the streets and cheered our Prime Minister as the representative of the country which had twice assisted in their liberation. The people of France and Belgium and Holland whom I met know what it means to be under the domination of a brutal and totalitarian enemy and the people of Poland and Czechoslovakia and other countries also know what it means to suffer loss of their liberties. Because of her willingness to fight and with the support she had from the countries of the Commonwealth and later the United States, Britain stood and still stands as the bulwark of freedom and the outpost of liberty.

No, let's not talk about sacrifices made in vain, but let us do what we can to assure that the sacrifices which brought victory will also bring peace.

We had hoped that long before this peace might have been made and guaranteed by the effective organization of all nations for their common security, determined by the collective will, based on the common interest.

Unfortunately that has not happened. A worsened international situation has forced changes in policy and conduct in every part of the world. The refusal of the Russians to co-operate in the United Nations and everywhere else brought about Western Union on the 17th of March and will, we hope, bring about the participation of the United States and Canada with the countries of Western Europe in an Atlantic Security Agreement, which will be a stronghold of peace and a bulwark for the defence of our country. Everyone knows that such a union would be defensive in character, just as everyone knows that the military arrangements between Canada and the United States are defensive in character. The Russians have talked about Mr. St. Laurent and myself as warmongers, called us tools of Wall Street. Here are some amusing passages from the Russian publication, Red Star and Pravda. Well, I

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haven't been offered anything yet! The arrangements in Canada and the United States have been working out well because they make sense, because they are in the interests of both countries, because they are founded on mutual respect, because we feel and think alike and are determined to preserve our way of life on this continent.

The international situation has produced an attitude in Canada towards defence which is quite different from anything we have ever had before in peacetime.

During the ten years before the war our expenditures on defence averaged less than 20 million dollars and we had less than 6,000 men in the Navy, Army and Air Force. Today our expenditures are twelve times as great and our forces are six times as large.

We now are engaged in building up forces we regard as the minimum necessary to meet the defence needs of Canada. They will include relatively small forces in being, highly trained, efficient, mechanized, largely air borne, adequate to meet immediate local defence needs as these may change from time to time. Notice that I say as these may change from time to time. That means that there is nothing static in our outlook, in our plans or in our programme; our planning provides for change and development to meet varying needs.

Some time ago, as part of these plans we announced that in 1949 we would begin the activation of three interceptor stations. This was regarded as something new, something almost revolutionary. It was simply part of a plan of development that had been worked out. There will be many more changes and developments. We cannot tell them all because there isn't anything more certain than that long-term plans will have to be changed. Also, I sometimes feel that we and other countries tell a good deal too much. However, to tell as much as possible is the only way of preventing irresponsible and far-fetched speculation.

While these plans provide for very much stronger active forces than before, they also provide for the Naval Reserve Divisions, the Reserve Army and Auxiliary Squadrons of the Air Force as major components on which we would build very much larger forces in the event of an emergency.

What reserve organization and training meant in the Second World War is shown by the figures that at the end of the war reserve officers furnished 75% of the Divisional Commanders, 85% of the Brigadiers and 98% of the Unit Commanders.

In a report to the New Zealand Government, Field Marshal Montgomery said, (I quote from a speech by the Honourable F. Jones, Minister of Defence) "Base everything on the territorial army - whatever we can afford. Maintain sufficient regulars to train the territorial army - no more" and he added, "If we can maintain a flow of men through the Army with even three months' training our defensive organization will be reasonably efficient." What we may presume the Field Marshal meant was not that it is possible to regard men having three months' training as fully qualified soldiers but that territorials, or reserves as we call them, having three months' training would provide an efficient basis for an effective defence organization.

It is interesting to note that in England today the territorial forces, corresponding very closely to our reserves, are regarded as the nucleus that would be used as front line troops in the event of an emergency. At present the territorials' strength is about

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50,000 and Field Marshal Montgomery is calling for volunteers to bring it up to 150,000. Today the strength of our reserve army is about 35,000 and we are calling for volunteers to bring it up to . . . well, as many as we can get. We are not placing final ceilings on the number of officers, N.C.O.s. and men in any individual unit. We are setting targets. If the unit meets the target in one respect then consideration will be given to raising the target. We want to have an organization which is sufficiently flexible to take account of the different stages of organization and different local conditions which will enable one unit to succeed in one respect and another unit somewhere else to succeed in another way or at a later date.

As you know, there have been a great many improvements in the conditions of training and service in the reserve since the war.

Physical, educational and professional qualifications are being set as high as those in the regular forces and the same conditions of service, uniform, rank badges, pay and so on, so as to eliminate every difference to the end that all regard themselves as members of one team with the title, earned and glorified by action in Western Europe, "The Canadian Army". The only difference is that some men are part time and some are full time. Both are serving Canada, both are working and training to be ready to meet any emergency that may arise.

Another difference between the situation today and what it was in 1939 is that today reserve army units have quantities of the most modern equipment. They have tanks and guns and radar sets and all the other complicated and expensive paraphernalia of modern war. What is more, we have more of it in mobilization stores, representing hundreds of millions of dollars of the finest work of Canadian and American and British workmen. It is being taken good care of. When it is considered necessary it is overhauled and modified to bring it up to date. When it becomes obsolete, we sell it or scrap it if there is anything better to take its place. Here again there is nothing static in the outlook. We are working with others constantly to exchange views as to improvements and developments.

We are trying to create conditions of service that put the armed forces on an equal or better footing with men having correspondingly high educational qualifications in civilian life.

In so far as they are applicable, these changes are extended to reserve army personnel.

Let us look at some of these:

Our pension plans is unquestionably the most generous in the world.

Pay and Allowances were revised in 1946 and again in 1948 to take account of changes in the cost of living and are under constant examination.

Our forces have as good clothing as any we know. A summer uniform, corresponding to the Air Force tropical worsted, will be supplied to the Army as soon as it can be manufactured.

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We are progressively providing single men with barrack accommodation in rooms holding 4, 3 or 2 soldiers each. They all have separate beds, good springs and mattresses, sheets and pillow slips. In some camps bed lights are issued and in others they are privately obtained. In most of the camps the men have wardrobes.

Our married quarters programme is well advanced. By the 31st March, 1949, we shall have completed or converted about 7,000 additional married quarters, a figure proportionately far in excess of anything achieved in any other country.

I mention these things because I don't think everyone knows them and they have an important bearing on the recruiting campaign that we are carrying on now. Last year and this, we have had nation-wide campaigns for the three Services for active and reserve forces together and at the same time have allocated substantial sums for expenditure in commands, by areas and by units.

There is a great change in the kind and quality of training offered to active and reserve forces alike. This year and last, as you know, cadres, consisting principally of officers and N.C.Os. of reserve units to the number of about 12,000, received 7 days' intensive training at the training camps and schools. I saw this going on, as many of you did, at Petawawa, when you were there. I believe you will agree that it was impressive. We had observers there from other countries and they were struck with the organization, which permitted the whole available time to be spent by all the officers and men on training. The housekeeping was done for them. It was surprising to find how much could be given and assimilated in so short a time by the up-to-date methods used. Troops who had never fired a gun were doing good artillery practice at the end of two and three days. Men were driving and firing from tanks and troop carriers and all such monsters under well-simulated war conditions. There was little or no drill on the square, but there was no absence of the discipline which comes from interest, a sense of responsibility, a devotion to a common purpose and the satisfaction of taking part in an important job which was being well-done.

The drill comes earlier on. Incidentally, I was shown at Borden a precision squad which carried out 47 movements, including marching and fixing bayonets and everything else, the whole of the manual, without a single word of command and without a single mistake. These men, I thought, must be the seasoned veterans of the R.C.Rs. or the Princess Pats. Not at all. They were the recruit squad of the R.C.A.S.C. Not one of them had been in the army more than ten weeks. I said I had never seen drill like it and at my suggestion they are giving exhibitions at various cities during Army Week. We are going to advertise them: "See what ten weeks in our Army does to a man!"

The men we are getting either as officers or in the ranks are joining because they see in service the opportunity for a useful career and a career with opportunity. Because our army is intended to be good as well as small, we have to have high educational standards and while we are making these just as flexible as possible in relation to the different jobs and posts, we have found it necessary to reject 4 out of 5 applicants. That has been a difficult decision to take, but it is going to pay dividends in the future. Had we not had such high standards, we could have had greater numbers in the regular forces today, but that would not have advanced us because we would have had to give the same men education and additional training in the services, which would have added greatly to the public expense and impaired the efficiency of the army generally because a larger proportion would have been employed on elementary training.

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I was going to say you are primarily interested in the reserve, but I don't believe that is so. You are interested in all the forces. If the active forces are as good as I think they are and become as much better as I believe they will, then your work in the reserve will be simplified. People will have a pride and interest in the active and reserve forces which will guarantee support.

In recent months I have visited officers and men of the three services. They are the kind of men anyone would be proud to work with.

In both the full time and reserve forces can enjoy advantages of comradeship in good conditions of service while they help to guard our country.

There are good reasons for joining the Reserves. Here are some of them:

- (1) The Reserve Army in Canada as in Britain and other countries provides the organizational framework, the interested and trained personnel, the buildings and the equipment for the formation of any future fighting force.
- (2) The Reserve Army fosters regimental and family traditions of service.
- (3) The Reserve Army is the one means whereby a man can contribute to the security of the nation at the same time as he carries out his civilian functions as a citizen and so discharge part of the obligations which result from the privileges of citizenship.
- (4) The Reserve Army gives young men modern military training with the best modern equipment.
- (5) The Reserve Army provides opportunities for trades training under competent instructors.
- (6) The Reserve Army produces disciplined alertness and the habit of teamwork.
- (7) The Reserve Army provides an opportunity for healthy development by the provision of sports equipment, playing facilities, competent instructors and organized leagues.
- (8) The Reserve Army by its system of local units and armouries fosters a fine form of comradeship and gives opportunities for recreation and social activity of a community nature.
- (9) In short, the Reserve Army provides opportunities for national service and healthy recreation under good conditions at the same rates of pay as for the Active Force; it is an exercise and a training in good citizenship. Men serving in the Armed Forces of Canada should be "Citizens Plus".

If they are good reasons for joining the Reserve, are not there even better reasons to join the Governor General's Foot Guards, with its fine record of service, its fine traditions, its reputation for good comradeship.

What we want today are more men of good character, good education and good physique to serve Canada in the active and reserve forces - we want them not to cease to be citizens but to add to their quality as citizens and their opportunities as citizens the fact that they are able as well as willing to defend their country; our armed forces must be "Citizens Plus".