

*Military Convention with Italy*

PQ

Mr King – To ask the Minister of National Service, if he will state at what date the military convention with Italy was signed; when did it become operative; how many Italians of military age were in Great Britain at the beginning of this year; how many were estimated as likely to join the British Army; how many Italians had joined up on or before 25<sup>th</sup> May; and how many had been exempted by the Italian authorities at that date [*Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May.*]

*Daily Debates, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1918*

Mr King asked (1) the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that under the Military Convention with Italy only 426 Italians have joined the British Army, and that the Italian authorities have given exemptions to 3,089 persons; whether he will inquire of the Italian Ambassador in London on what principles. If any, these exemptions have been given: (2) the Minister of National Service at what date the Military Convention with Italy was signed; when did it become operative; how many Italians of military age were in Great Britain at the beginning of this year; how many were estimated as likely to join the British Army; how many Italians had joined up on or before 28<sup>th</sup> May; and how many had been exempted by the Italian authorities at that date?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the MINISTRY of NATIONAL SERVICE (Mr Beck): My right hon. Friend has asked me to reply to question No 3. The convention with Italy was signed on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1917. It became operative on the 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1918. At the beginning of this year, the names of approximately 12,900 Italians were on the military registers. I am not aware of any estimate as to how many were likely to join the British Army. On 15<sup>th</sup> May, 700 were serving in the British Army, 1805 were serving with the Italian Army; 3,063 had been exempted by the Italian Consular authorities; 791 have been granted protection or exemption on occupational or personal grounds, or have application pending; and 308 were on examination found unfit for service or of so low a medical grade as not to be required at present. Of the remainder, some are under investigation at the present time by the British and Italian authorities. It is probable that, though their names were still on the military registers, a number of these men have returned to Italy for the purpose of serving with the Italian forces.

*Note**These are two cuttings from printed documents*