

explanation for not granting the cost of living bonus in some form to soldiers' dependents. I can give the minister one suggestion as to where he could find the money to do that; if we abolished that museum of political inactivity known as the other place, it would pay quite a bit of the cost.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): But look at all those people who want to go there.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Well, I am not a lawyer.

There is another thing which I should like to endorse and which if we as returned men did not endorse we would be derelict in our duty. No member of the government has given any reasonable excuse why at least for embarkation leave we cannot give free passage to every soldier in Canada.

I am not going to try to tell the minister how to defend the Pacific coast or the Atlantic, because I am not a military strategist. I have seen a collection of most gallant gentlemen round here for many days, who should be getting on with the war, instead of listening to speeches. A second reason is that I do not yet know what the coast defences are, and I do not think any private member here does.

Perhaps for the first time, but I hope not for the last time, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Vancouver East upon an excellent speech to-night. Generally I agree with the hon. member for Vancouver South more than with the hon. member for Vancouver East, because there is a little south-east Vancouver war in our country. I do not think any private member can tell what the strategy should be for defending the Pacific coast, but I should like to ask the minister a couple of questions in that connection. I am not satisfied with the stand his staff has taken, as I understand it. Perhaps he will correct me if I am wrong; but, as I understand, his staff are perfectly satisfied that we have proper provision, in the event of attack on the Pacific coast, for taking reinforcements to the coast, either man-power or munitions, or the possible necessity of evacuation from Pacific coast cities. I am sure the minister has not been correctly advised through his staff; I presume the staff are aware—if not, they should be; there are enough of them—that we have no alternative highway or railway to get supplies in to the coast or people out from the Pacific coast in the event of attack. I am sure the minister has not been advised by his staff that the partial evacuation from Hastings park is now stretched along the trans-Canada

highway in boxcars where bombs could be dropped by the most amateur Japanese saboteurs, putting either of the railways out of action.

Mr. MITCHELL: How can they get the bombs?

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: I do not think you want me to point out the dates that powder was issued to Japanese in British Columbia, since Pearl Harbour, and neither you nor I know where that powder went. I will not say that this applies to the Canadian Pacific railway, but I do know that at one point immediately adjacent to the tracks of the Canadian National Railways in the Fraser valley there are two bridges, one for the Canadian Pacific and the other for the Canadian National. They crisscross the river at the identical spot. Any member from British Columbia knows where that point is, but I am sorry that some of the government and the staff do not know where it is. The trans-Canada highway also passes through there. One box of powder would put those three arteries out of action, and that is the only way there is to get in supplies from our arsenals in Quebec and Ontario and the interior of British Columbia. There would be no way to evacuate the people from the lower mainland of British Columbia, and no way to protect the air fields.

I am sorry that the minister did not know this. I do not claim to be a military strategist; but every person about ten years of age in British Columbia knows it. I do not wish to say what the Pacific defences are; I do not know. But I have a certain amount of common sense; and I know when you have Japanese, the most dastardly enemies we have, including Hitler, right alongside railway tracks, you have a dangerous condition. Our governor general went past there a short time ago, and the Japanese could have thrown a bomb from their car right into his private car, by reaching from one car to the other. Under such conditions we do not have a satisfactory defence on the Pacific coast, so far as the Japanese are concerned.

I should like to know what steps the Department of National Defence are taking to provide both an outlet from and an inlet to the Pacific coast from our arsenals—because the minister knows only too well where they are in British Columbia and elsewhere. I do not wish to be criticizing all the time—although I may have something to say to-morrow in connection with a criticism along another line. But I do say there has been too much time wasted. As one hon. member said the other day, probably he was wasting time; probably