

*Supply—National Defence*

to do it with? Third, is what we have to do it with adequate for what we have to do?

First of all, what do we have to do? As the minister has pointed out in the white paper, the first consideration is the defence of our coastal areas; the warding off of attacks on our shipping, the laying of mines and possibly attacks by guided missiles. The minister mentioned that this afternoon, and I was particularly interested in view of the fact that it is a subject with which I dealt on the estimates last year. I do not think there is very much likelihood of attacks on this coast by surface ships of the Soviet navy, particularly in view of the large number of cruisers and larger ships that are presently used by the United States and the United Kingdom.

However, I should like to point out that the defence of coastal areas is necessary. Even a war involving hydrogen bombs would not necessarily terminate very quickly. The role of the navy must be emphasized again. I think it is quite clear that our sea lanes must be kept open, and in this regard I should like to refer to a few remarks—I do not intend to read them, but hon. members interested may refer them—by Mr. George Ward, parliamentary and financial secretary to the admiralty. These remarks appear on page 2331 of the United Kingdom *Hansard* No. 346, of March 8 of this year. Mr. Ward says:

Clearly Russia recognizes that massive land and air forces and the thermonuclear bomb are not enough, and that she must also be able to dispute command of the seas.

He goes on further to point out that it will not be the western powers that will have the opportunity of starting a war. He says:

But since we shall not decide when a war is to start, the power that does so will presumably have the wit to see that its submarines and, indeed, its entire navy, are at sea first . . .

In the defence of our coastal areas there are certain areas that are obvious, such as the approaches to our Atlantic provinces and to the Pacific coast, but there is another area which I think does not have the attention it should have, so far as the public is concerned at any rate, though possibly it has from the department. There is one very important area of Canada that has not received very much attention, and that is the Arctic and the Hudson bay area. I have brought this subject up in the house before. We have had plenty of indication that the Soviet union has been setting up air bases on the Arctic ice islands that float around in the polar waters. Apparently they are still outside Canadian waters, but there is nothing to prevent the Soviet union from setting up air and submarine bases on these Arctic

islands in polar waters. I understand they could be set up in a week or ten days.

I also understand that the Soviet union has submarines which are investigating the floors of the ocean in the Arctic area, travelling underneath the ice. I think they are a great menace to this country. The Soviet union in the event of trouble starting, could secretly set up bases on these Arctic ice islands. It is something that should be considered, and I hope it is being taken into consideration by the government.

Regarding the defence of the sea lanes, of course, it is largely a matter of co-operation with our NATO allies. Apparently our role is that of an anti-submarine navy, which I think is quite proper. However, I note that on page 13 of the white paper it is stated:

The Royal Canadian Navy has 40 warships currently earmarked as this country's contribution for the defence of coastal waters in the Canada-United States region and for the NATO naval forces under the control of the supreme allied commander, Atlantic . . .

There are a number of questions I should like to ask the minister. I should like to know what types of ships are included in those 40 ships. Are they destroyer escorts, minesweepers or frigates, or what are they? I hope the minister will give us an answer when the remarks on the first item are concluded.

The next question I should like to deal with is, what do we have to do it with? In other words, what naval equipment do we have to carry out the duties outlined by the minister? In this respect I should like to refer to page 6 of the white paper and see what ships we have available. First of all we have a light fleet carrier; there is one in commission and one under construction. I think hon. members are generally familiar with what type of ship that is. Next there are two light cruisers. I should like to know one or two things about these light cruisers, the *Ontario* and the *Quebec*. Have they been remodelled since the last war or have they had any conversion? How long is it intended to keep them in service, and what are they used for, apart from taking training cruises around the globe?

Next are the destroyer escorts. We see that there are 12 in commission and 13 under construction. As most hon. members know, the destroyer escorts of the Canadian navy are of several classes. There is the new St. Laurent class which, from what I have been able to gather, is an exceedingly fine ship. Then there are the Tribal class ships which have been remodelled and reconverted, and then there is the Crescent class, of which I believe there are two.

[Mr. Nesbitt.]