

the patrol boat Grilse? These are the men whom he speaks of as not being engaged in perilous service.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: It is true that the Grilse on her way from Halifax to Bermuda met with disaster and some lives were lost. That steamer should not have been sent to sea at the time.

Mr. CURRIE: The same thing is liable to occur to any one of the boats in this patrol service.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: She was the largest boat on the east coast engaged in patrol service. The case of the Grilse is evidence of the fact that the greater part of the patrol service down there is unnecessary. The Grilse never performed any large amount of service while there; she never should have been sent there. She is capable of real service, not on the Canadian coast but on the coast of the United Kingdom, on account of her great speed.

Mr. CURRIE: The hon. gentleman knows that this patrol service extends far beyond Newfoundland. Several Newfoundland harbours are patrolled in the same way.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I do not know it, and I doubt very much whether my hon. friend does.

Mr. CURRIE: We are informing the hon. gentleman now of the facts.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Who is informing me?

Mr. CURRIE: You cannot tell what moment a submarine will arrive off the coast of Nova Scotia and blow up one of the fishing towns.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I do not accept my hon. friend as an authority on this matter. Men much more familiar with matters of this kind than the Secretary of State, the member for North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) or myself, say that the patrol service on the Atlantic coast is largely unnecessary—and I believe that is a fact. I should like the minister to give the committee some reason for retaining in the Bill as it now stands the clause to which I refer. Is it not peculiar that the female relatives of wireless operators should be enfranchised? A great number of men in this service in the city of Halifax never go to sea. Possibly there may be grounds of extending the franchise to some female relatives in some cases, but it is unnecessary and unfair to leave the provision so

[Mr. Currie.]

broad and so unrestricted as it is in its present form.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is putting me at an unfair advantage to ask me to defend the Naval Department and to proceed on the assumption that the Naval Department is making a fraud of its work. I am not the Minister of Naval Service, but I am satisfied that the hon. gentleman's allegations in that regard are not founded upon fact. Wireless operators surely go out to sea. I assume that the mine-sweepers have wireless operators on board—men who are enlisted in the naval forces. What is the difference between a man who is a wireless operator on a mine-sweeper and a man who is a paymaster of a battalion? There are degrees of peril, degrees of service, degrees of hard work, endurance, suffering. You cannot draw an exact line in that respect.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Quite a number of wireless operators perform service on land.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I assume they are sometimes on land and sometimes on ship. Take the men engaged in construction and forestry work; some of them are working in England; some of them may at no time be in France. The only bold line you can draw—the fairest line, without going into details in individual cases—is the line between active war service and something there is not war service of any kind. If we did everything with absolute fairness, if that were possible at all, we would give to the poor fellow in the front line who goes over the parapet about twenty-five votes, and to the fellow in England one. We cannot do those things.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Let me remind the Secretary of State that at Halifax two regiments, which were called out at the commencement of the war by compulsion, are still performing service. Many of them are very much inconvenienced thereby. Many have been taken from their business, and would like to-day to avoid service and to return to their ordinary occupations. Are not the female relatives of those men just as much entitled to the franchise as many of those engaged in the naval service? They are performing war service.

Mr. ARTHURS: Have any of those men been refused the right to go overseas?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I do not see what that has to do with the matter.

Mr. ARTHURS: It certainly has a great deal to do with it. Those men perhaps have no desire to go overseas.