

*War Appropriation*

I am sure the minister was well satisfied with it by contrast with what existed there just a few months before. He has assured us that the two coasts will get full consideration as far as it is possible to furnish them with supplies of both men and material. He is not a man to make statements which he does not intend to carry out, and in that regard we are, I think, generally satisfied. We hope that supplies will increase considerably as the national production increases.

We are particularly pleased with the announcement he has made as far as the reserve army is concerned. Up to a short time ago that force was not very welcome; it did not get much encouragement unless it was producing recruits for the active army. During the Easter recess I asked the general officer commanding if he would give me a list of the units and the number of men of which each unit was short. This he did, and I undertook to see some of the civilians in Vancouver island between Victoria and Nanaimo to ask them if they would make it their job to see that these units were filled up. Invariably the statement made to me was, "Give us a definite job to do. Let us know what it is. If they will agree to give us supplies, we will see that every unit is filled, and more too." In one place where they had only a platoon, when I asked them if they would see that it was filled up, they said, "Yes. Get away from the idea that we are a recruiting centre, and we will not only fill up this platoon but give you a company from this one point."

It is said by some that the industrial people were not quite prepared to get behind the reserve army because it interfered with the operations in their plants. That is hardly a fair statement. The manufacturers in British Columbia are prepared to assist in seeing that their men go to the camp even if it does disturb their operations considerably, but there is one handicap in that. Once they start recruiting in a plant, nearly all the men want to go to the one unit, which means that out of 100 or 200 men you are apt to have twenty or twenty-five men going at one time to the camp, and that is a serious drawback. If there were some way of dividing up so that the men would go to the camps at different times, it would relieve that situation considerably.

The situation I want to speak of concerns our police. In British Columbia we have the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the provincial police and the municipal police. They work very well in peace time, but what is going to happen when a strain falls on the police force in case of a raid or under some

[Mr. Mayhew.]

unusual circumstances? Who will actually control the police force at that time? There should be one head, and the question should be settled now instead of waiting until the condition actually arises to decide who is to take the lead. The principle of one command is recognized, and there should be definitely one command as far as the police force in British Columbia is concerned.

Again, we have another group of voluntary men on the island known as the rangers. Recently they have recruited, and they have now a strength of about 6,000 men who are ready to step in behind the regular army, the reserve army, under the British Columbia command. These men are centred around the forest rangers camp, the wardens and the loggers, and they are men who know every road and trail across the island and who can be very valuable in case of attack. I wonder what support this government is giving to these men who call themselves rangers? What support will the government give them to make sure that they are a useful adjunct to the defence of Vancouver island? It will be noticed I am not worrying about the other part of Vancouver. They do not need to worry; the Japs will never get past us. We are trying to build up a protective force. The hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Green) smiles.

Mr. GREEN: I hope the hon. member is right.

Mr. MAYHEW: I think they should be given some encouragement. We have, in addition to that, a situation which I think is more serious than almost anything else. I refer to the danger of forest fires. If the enemy come, they can sweep over the island from north to south, drop leaflets, and set the whole island on fire, and it will take more help than we have in all our forces to fight such a fire, to say nothing of defending the island itself when that occurs. There is only one other source from which we can draw our supply, namely from the ordinary civilians, and I think something should be done now, envisaging the worst that might happen to us—not simply what may happen, but what is very likely to happen. I suggest that the last man on Vancouver island should be called or at least should be available for the purpose of fire-fighting. I make that suggestion to the government, or whoever is responsible for it. Here again there is the danger of not knowing just who is to assume the responsibility in case the need arises. Forest fires we have every year more or less, but if one should occur in the volume that might be expected from the enemy, it will take every man to fight it. There should be