

Supply—National Defence

cases that may be true, but in other cases I do not know that it is true. I should like to cite a specific example to the minister and invite his comments. I refer to a particular heavy ack-ack regiment of which I know. This regiment has one radar set, and its establishment calls for eight radar sets. The set which the regiment has is a Mark III, with a range of about 60,000 yards. This is the type of set that was used in the early part of the war, and which is now obsolete. This same regiment has four guns, and its establishment of course is 24.

The regiment consists of three batteries, and each battery is supposed to have eight guns. Apparently each battery has one gun, and there is one extra you might say. It seems to me that a distribution of armament of that nature is not sufficient to carry on proper training. These heavy ack-ack guns fire as a troop of four, particularly if they are being used for ground shooting which is one of their roles. It would seem to me that four guns for a regiment of that sort are not sufficient. It is not as good a distribution of guns as we had before the war in the reserve artillery batteries. At that time the one battery of which I have knowledge had four guns. This makes one wonder whether the provision of equipment to reserve force units, particularly those of a technical nature, is sufficient to carry out training.

In addition to commenting on that particular situation can the minister tell us—perhaps for security reasons he does not wish to do so—how many up-to-date radar sets for use with these heavy ack-ack guns we have in Canada; in other words, whether we have up-to-date radar sets which could be distributed to these heavy ack-ack regiments if required. If we have any of these up-to-date sets, why is it that at least one per regiment has not been distributed so that the personnel can get training on them?

Mr. Claxton: It happens, Mr. Chairman, that I know the number of heavy ack-ack guns that we have in Canada, and I shall be glad to give that information to the hon. member privately. We believe that we have possibly more than we require, and we are considering making some available to other countries. The reasons for not issuing more than one to some units—

Mr. Harkness: Is the minister speaking of guns or radar sets now?

Mr. Claxton: Guns. I assume the hon. gentleman is stating the facts correctly, and the reason is that there frequently is not the personnel or space to use more than one. There are large numbers in mobilization reserve, and if any unit can use any gun or

any equipment that we have, then that equipment is under the control of the local G.O.C. or area commander who can issue the equipment without any difficulty at all. No case has been brought to my attention of any lack of such equipment.

With regard to our radar equipment on such guns being modern the hon. gentleman is substantially correct. There is more modern equipment, although what we have works well. It would cost \$180,000 to apply modern equipment to each one of those guns, and we have thought that that amount of money could be better spent at present, in view of the possible developments in anti-aircraft work which might make that expenditure undesirable. It is a question of balancing whether we should do that now or do something else. We have decided to postpone that expenditure and do something else which we regard as more urgent. As hon. members know, the largest part of our expenditure on new equipment is for new ships for the navy, and aircraft for the air force.

Mr. Harkness: If I might just follow that up, the minister says there is plenty of this equipment. All the unit has to do is to apply for it. I happen to know that the unit did apply, but did not get it. I recall particularly a personal experience I had along that line about two years ago when I was still commanding a reserve regiment. I had an extremely difficult time getting S. P. guns. I knew the S. P. guns were here; nevertheless we were only issued them on the basis of one per battery which was almost useless for any sort of tactical training. It was only useful from the point of view of learning gun control and things along that line. You need at least two S. P. guns working together to give any training at all to the members of a troop or battery as to how those guns would be employed. I can assure the minister that I had extreme difficulty, in fact my second in command was turned down in regard to getting these guns. I had to take it up personally with N.D.H.Q. before we secured an increase in the allotment. I know from personal experience that frequently units cannot get an increase of equipment which they consider necessary. I would suggest that this situation should be looked into, and the reserve units should be canvassed by means of a questionnaire to commanding officers to ascertain what they think their needs are.

Of course the facilities to take care of the equipment must be considered. I know there is quite a bit in what the minister says. In some places there are no facilities for garaging or otherwise looking after and

[Mr. Harkness.]