

*Supply—Transport*

house, and indeed since I came to Ottawa, it would appear that it has had very little if any attention. At page 987 of *Hansard* for 1948 there is an answer made by the Minister of Transport in reply to a question asked by the then member for Skeena, Mr. Archibald. The present minister stated at that time, speaking of a coastguard:

The matter is one which has been given consideration not only by the Department of Transport but also by the government as a whole, and while the establishment of a coastguard deserves a great deal of sympathetic consideration, on the other hand when one considers the tremendous cost which would follow the extensive establishment of coastguards on all the coasts of Canada he cannot help but come to the conclusion that the cost would be entirely out of proportion to the matter to which my hon. friend referred.

To me at least, Mr. Chairman, that answer appears to have very little to commend it. To consider the question of cost when the matter of saving lives is at stake is not a very good answer for the government of the great Dominion of Canada to make, and particularly, I say to the minister, when so much money is being spent for other services that are not nearly so vital as the establishment of a coastguard. The minister also said at that time:

I should bring to the hon. member's attention, however, the fact that at the present time the existing facilities for such service are marine service steamers, fishery patrol vessels, Royal Canadian Mounted Police vessels and also the search and rescue squads of the R.C.A.F., which are devoted almost exclusively to air rescue, but which oftentimes have come to the assistance of marine casualties.

Again I say, Mr. Chairman, that this is no answer. In my humble opinion it is not sufficient to have a number of services such as those outlined by the minister. What is vitally needed is one service whose sole responsibility it will be.

The need of a coastguard, I feel certain, is apparent not only to hon. members whose constituencies border the sea but to hon. members whose constituencies are on the great lakes and in fact, I am sure, to all hon. members. I feel certain that those living inland, whose livelihood is not dependent in any way upon the sea or the great lakes, nevertheless have great interest in the safety of our seamen both on the lakes and on the greater waters of the Pacific and the Atlantic. The present system of spreading the marine services among half a dozen departments is stupid, inefficient, costly and illogical. A coastguard properly constituted could very well handle a number of the duties now distributed among different departments under different administrations. These duties would include policing and revenue protection, rescue services, hydrographic surveys and the maintenance of navigational aids.

Several of these services now are being looked after by the marine section of the mounted police. I entirely agree that this is a great force, but it was not designed nor equipped for coastguard work. The marine section is primarily a police force and operates as such. The extraordinary arrangement of using policemen for sea duty, I have been told, has led to use of the expression, "Spurs on the quarterdeck". Do not think I am criticizing this great force in any way, Mr. Chairman. I am not. They have shown themselves to be first-class sailors. They have performed many missions which were really the work of a coastguard rather than police work. My criticism is directed not against the section but against the system. The sort of men in the marine section is shown by the fact that in the last great war 87 per cent of the personnel joined the armed services, most of them serving with the navy, where they played a great part in those frantic days when Canada's navy was expanding from practically nothing to the tremendous striking force it became by the end of the war. These men helped in setting up port defences, examination stations, sea-going patrols and many other routines which had to be established quickly. They were of the greatest value in training new recruits, since they possessed the type of knowledge most necessary, including engineering, administration and seamanship. Sixty-six Canadian warships were commanded by men of the section, while 28 warships had men from the section in charge of their engine rooms. It is a record of which they may well be proud; and it proves that Canada can find competent seamen for a properly constituted coastguard service, men who can do a more useful job for our country than is possible at the present time, with the marine services divided among so many different departments.

Hon. members are aware of the great services performed by the United States coastguard. They must be aware also of how often Canada is compelled to call upon that coastguard service, because we have none of our own. It should be humiliating to all hon. members and indeed to all Canadians that in this day and age, when Canada is setting herself up as a world power, we must rely upon the assistance of our great neighbour to the south, no matter how willingly that assistance may be given.

This is no new question I am bringing up. In my discussion and reading since coming to Ottawa I find that it has been urged on innumerable occasions. The Bovey commission reported some considerable time ago, in