

Supply—National Defence

\$82 million made available for the navy, and at the same time do the essential work of constructing the nine new vessels which are now under way. There are 41.5 per cent of our naval personnel at sea. That is a very high proportion, higher than we had during wartime. I believe it is higher than any other country, and possibly it is too high because in a sense we may be too operational for the strength and resources of the navy. Nevertheless, because of the way in which the post-war organization of the navy has been proceeded with, we have managed to attain that result.

As evidence of what I have said, there is the fact that it is planned that six vessels are to take part in the largest peacetime cruise ever to be undertaken by the navy. The *Canso*, *Sioux* and *Athabaskan* will leave from Esquimalt on the 11th of July, 1950, and the *Magnificent*, *Huron* and *Micmac* from Halifax on the 23rd of August, 1950. They will first visit Londonderry, where they will engage in extensive antisubmarine and other operations in co-operation with ships and aircraft of the Royal Navy. In this voyage will be involved 195 officers and 1,875 men, and on the *Magnificent* there will be three squadrons of her aircraft. In the course of the voyage the ships will visit several of the North Atlantic treaty nations. The object of the voyage is first to obtain extensive training in an extended sea voyage; second, to familiarize officers and men with the waters and ports of the friendly nations with which we are co-operating; and third, to co-operate with the fleets and ships of several of these nations, including the United Kingdom particularly.

Therefore the exercise will be a marked demonstration of the capacity of the ships and men of the Royal Canadian Navy to operate under realistic conditions involving extensive operations of the type which they would have to undertake if there should be another emergency.

Again I join the leader of the opposition and the Secretary of State for External Affairs in emphasizing that our ships and other forces will never be used for any purpose other than to deter aggression and to defend ourselves and our allies.

If we are to have more ships operational, it can only be done by making more money available, and that can only be done by taking it from the air force, the army, what is allotted for defence research, or from other sources of revenue of the government as a whole. We do not know any other way of doing it. The same thing applies to the other services.

Turning to the air force, our object is to build towards an operational force of over

twenty active and auxiliary squadrons. As hon. members know, at the present time we have two squadrons equipped with Vampire Mark III's in the active force, and several in the auxiliary force. As the leader of the opposition quite properly points out, the Vampire Mark III is a very good operational aircraft of a type which came into active operation after the end of the second world war. They are still one of the best aircraft for army co-operation that there are anywhere, but they have not the speed and the armament of some later types. They are still front line service aircraft, however, in the countries which use them.

To supplement and replace them as they are used, we have been working on the production of the CF-100 and the F-86. Each of these is of its type the leading aircraft of any we know of having corresponding characteristics. We were not able to produce them before because they did not exist. We are pressing on with the production of the F-86, and with the development and production of the CF-100, as rapidly as that can be done. The primary role of our air force is to assist in the defence of North America. We believe our air force is adequate for that purpose at the present time, in co-operation with forces of the United States that would be properly employed in that task, particularly in Alaska in the northwest and in Newfoundland in the northeast. We do not suggest it will be adequate for that purpose if it remains at its present size. Therefore we are developing it as fast as we can to make it constantly more operational.

In this connection, as I have announced before, though I do not think I have mentioned it in the house, toward that end we expect to have a squadron of our air force undergoing operational training in the United Kingdom early in 1951, and further squadrons successively engaged in training there and possibly in other North Atlantic treaty nations in rotation for periods of several months at a time. That will be the supplement or complement of the training we provide on this side for North Atlantic treaty nations in aircrew and army. In our case, however, we shall be sending squadrons of officers and men, and probably ground crew as well as aircrew, who are fully trained operationally, and who will be sent over there for further training in larger formations, in working in co-operation with United Kingdom forces and in familiarization with the terrain on the other side of the Atlantic. We expect that as time goes on this will become a very important branch of our air force activity.