

that I have spoken to the house only three times since I have been a member of it, that is, since November, 1940. I have felt that enough speeches were being made on the war without my adding to the number, and I agree with what was said by a newspaper man some months ago that if words could win the war we would have beaten the axis long ago.

It might be of some advantage to the committee if, before any detailed consideration of the estimates of the Department of National Defence for Naval Services be undertaken, I should give to the committee a broad outline of the work of the Royal Canadian Navy. That work is part of the greatest naval undertaking of which history has any record. Every continent in the world, with the exception of south America, is wholly or partly engaged directly in this great struggle. This fact alone implies that men and supplies have to be transported over great distances and that much of that transport has to be over the sea. Five-sevenths of the surface of the earth is covered with water, and since the conflict is now universal or global in character the magnitude of the task of the merchant navies of the allied countries, and of the task of the ships which escort those navies, must be apparent to all.

It is the simple truth to say that if you were to set out by ship from the western shore of Canada across the great Pacific ocean, continue on through the Indian ocean, then around through the Red sea and into the Mediterranean and back into the Atlantic—or you could take the alternative route, down by the island of Madagascar and the cape of Good Hope into the Atlantic—and thence across the Atlantic to the eastern shore of Canada, you would have practically circumnavigated the globe. Over all that tremendous distance, over all that great expanse of water, you would be liable, if you were in a British or allied ship, to attack at any given instant of time. In not a single foot or fathom of those waters could the ship be considered absolutely safe from enemy attack. The allied nations are on the circumference of a great circle, a circle as great as the world; the enemy is within the circle, and he has been and is now able to make sudden thrusts to break the circumference of the circle at any given point. Hence you have thrusts in the Japanese area extending from Australia to the shores of India; you have thrusts by the Germans all along the eastern coast of Europe. It is an easy thing to do; it is a difficult thing to counteract.

Over that 20,000 miles of sea line the ships of the allied countries must ply, carrying men and materials; and where these merchant ships go, escort vessels ought to go also. In the first

years of the war the main line to be guarded was the line running between North America and Great Britain. From the very beginning of the war the Canadian navy has cooperated with the Royal Navy in the defence of that line, and while in recent months the conflict has spread to the Pacific ocean, and, in consequence, other supply routes have to be guarded and maintained, still the Atlantic route, linking Europe and North America, continues to be and always will be of prime importance. That line is now guarded and watched by navies of the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, and it is guarded in almost equal measure by these three navies.

Historically the role of a navy has been to provide battle fleets and to escort merchant ships. The navy's function was to engage the enemy surface craft in direct combat and to protect merchant shipping. Then in the history of naval warfare two new menaces appeared, the mine and the submarine. So that where at one time we needed powerful ships and powerful guns to deal with surface attack, now new methods of naval warfare have to be evolved. These methods take the form of small but fast craft such as destroyers, corvettes, mine-sweepers, motor torpedo boats and smaller types of ships.

It is along these lines that the Canadian navy has developed. Up to the present our navy has been primarily a convoy navy, and its main purpose has been to match in speed and power the attacks made by enemy ships. But as the enemy improves the speed and striking power of his ships we must at the very least keep pace, and desirably we should outstrip him. It is no secret now that some of the enemy U boats, some of the enemy submarines of the more modern type, are considerably faster and stronger than formerly. It is known also that German submarines can leave their bases on the shores of Europe, cross the Atlantic, spend some time hunting ships along the ocean lanes or along the Canadian or United States coasts, and still be able to return to their bases on the shores of Europe without the necessity of refuelling. It is no secret either that submarine attacks have been carried out within sight of the Canadian coast and within sight of the coasts of the United States within recent months.

Our naval engineers here and in the United States and Britain are constantly on the alert to meet these new threats to the safety of our convoy routes. In spite of all that can be done to overcome submarine attacks it must be admitted that during this year, 1942, merchant shipping losses have been very heavy, particularly in North American coastal waters.