

Supply—National Defence

common units and the like, that he concentrate on the supporting services first until he can be sure that they have reached the efficiency he desires before moving into the field of the fighting services.

In dealing with the problem of proper working conditions and the morale of the armed forces I should not like to omit the civilian prevailing rate and civil service employees. In the Halifax area we have a large number of prevailing rate employees who for some years have been restive about the methods under which they have been paid. I would suggest to the Associate Minister of National Defence, since I believe this is largely his field, that he give considerable thought to the form of collective bargaining which I understand will be introduced some time later this session. I see that the Associate Minister assents so I take it that we shall tackle this later.

May I suggest to the Associate Minister that it be a bona fide, collective bargaining procedure in which considerable authority is given to those who bargain for the government, the people who sit across the table, to deal honestly and effectively with the demands presented to them. This should be done instead of having them appear at collective bargaining procedures in which they are simply messengers sent in this case by the Department of National Defence or in other cases by other government departments. If this assurance can be given when collective bargaining arrangements are brought in, I think that the Minister of National Defence and the Associate Minister of National Defence will have done a real service to the prevailing rate employees not only in the Halifax area but in other areas as well. The ministers are undoubtedly aware that from time to time protests have arisen about this matter and that it has been hard to satisfy employees that they are getting their just desserts.

Finally, sir, I should like to make the point that the people of my area, and I imagine people in other areas of Canada, are very concerned about the removal of the mine sweeping squadron. To us that is an almost incomprehensible act. We do know that the Russian navy has submarines capable of laying mines. One need only to look at the globe to see that off the western coast of Norway lie sea lanes forming a gigantic arrow pointed at the east coast of Canada down which submarines can come. Yet the mine

[Mr. McCleave.]

sweeping squadron has been consigned to oblivion. I do hope that the minister will make an explanation to the house later in the debate. As I understand it, this measure has been brought about strictly with a view to economy.

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that if the worst should happen, and I presume the minister must prepare his policies assuming that the worst will happen, Halifax harbour, ports on the St. Lawrence River and all other major ports on the east and west coast will be out of action in the next world war in the first couple of hours. Our naval strength will also be out of action because if the navy cannot venture out of harbours on account of mines ships will be bottled up inside the harbours. My understanding has always been that our role in NATO is an antisubmarine role. I would think that the minister could perform a useful service if he could assure us that the mine problem is going to be met in some way. I do not think that he can give that assurance because naval officers I have talked to are completely baffled why this particular policy was adopted.

I suggest to the minister that he read Samuel Eliot Morison's history of the United States. He was an old sea dog, philosopher and historian, and he did say certain things which are true. Admiral Morison makes a very strong point, that to be a good maritime nation you have to act as a maritime nation. I suggest that by adopting a policy directed away from having a strong and effective Canadian navy Canada is forfeiting much of its right to be considered one of the world's leading maritime nations. I am afraid, sir, that the minister has adopted policies which one could consider to be of a landlubber variety.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Chairman, I have only a few remarks in extension of those by the senior member for Halifax. As the junior member I defer in most cases to his wisdom. The question of the housing of service personnel raised a moment ago by my colleague is indeed a very important one. Very pressing sociological patterns are developing not only in our area where we have a large number of service people and their families living in housing supplied by various departments of government but also right across Canada. Many of these problems have apparent and obvious reasons. Families are growing up and