

*Supply—National Defence*

kind of threat that the Minister of National Health and Welfare said it was a few days ago, if it is the kind of threat which has been described by the Prime Minister of Britain and by the President of the United States, then what this country needs, and what every other country needs, is military forces in being ready to take the field, military forces which can be used to defend this country.

Today the Minister of National Defence explained the absence of equipment of a kind which would make it possible to engage in service activities by explaining the time that it required to produce many of the modern machines of war. That explanation undoubtedly is one related to the production now under way; but after all surely this country, and every other free country, should prepare to defend itself as best it can when an issue might arise while it is preparing for the more ideal form of defence at some later date.

It will not be any comfort to Canadians of future generations if they read that we were preparing a three-year plan or a five-year plan that would have been good had it ever been fulfilled, but that unfortunately those against whom we were making that preparation were not working on the same schedule. And yet that is exactly the situation with which we are confronted. We are confronted with the necessity of making use of such forces as we have for the preservation of peace. Surely it is within the capacity of this country to improvise and to make use of much of the equipment that we have for the purpose of creating forces in being.

We simply have no forces in being in this country today to meet any serious test that might be imposed upon us. We have a magnificent group of young men in Korea today, as fine young men as are joined today in the cause of freedom in that distant land; but it took many long months to train, to bring together and organize these young men. Now they have taken their places in the ranks of freedom. A long time ago, measured in terms of this emergency, the Canadian government, along with other governments, decided on the responsibility that this nation would accept in the defence of the Atlantic area. Surely it will not be said that Canada was not aware some time ago what its commitments were. Surely it was indicated some time ago that it had been agreed what these commitments would be.

If that agreement did take place some time ago, as was indicated in this house and elsewhere, then why is recruiting for the force

required to fulfil that commitment being started only this week? It will not increase that force in size merely to criticize that delay; but it is important, because of that delay, again to consider how far we should be prepared to give blanket approval to broad statements without detail, and certainly without more detail than we have in the book of estimates now before us.

Yesterday the Minister of National Defence devoted a good deal of time to answering certain points that had been raised. This all could be summed up in the simple words "some sweet day"; because these are expressions of hope of things they are going to be able to do rather than answers as to what they have already done.

Naturally one of the things which must be a matter of concern to every hon. member is the availability of training supplies and training equipment for whatever men are called up for such force as may be required. Well, the house was informed and the people of Canada were informed through the press gallery and dispatches that went out from here, as well as by radio and news digests of these reports, that one of the points the minister made yesterday was that the Department of National Defence had been looking for five years for a huge camp area, one hundred miles by thirty miles, large enough to train an army formation as large as a brigade.

Mr. Chairman, we have many areas in Canada large enough to train a brigade. We have now millions of acres set aside as camp areas. But if, for any reason not disclosed in detail, we needed a camp area one hundred miles by thirty miles, we did not need to wait five years to get it. We have 3,600,000 square miles in Canada; so it should not be too difficult to find an area of 3,000 square miles for the purposes of defence preparation.

When we are told that we need an area of this kind to carry out training and, by implication, told that the reason we could not train a brigade in Canada before was that we did not have this area—and of course we are not training a brigade in Canada now, as a brigade—let us just see some of the camp areas that are available. There is Wainwright in Alberta. Wainwright is one of the largest camp areas in this country; it is a magnificent camp area.

I am not picking that out particularly as a chosen spot, but if additional land were needed, then the dominion government had plenty of power to increase that area substantially.