

*Supply—National Defence*

In this regard I mentioned the situation in the navy where some 20 per cent or 25 per cent of our remaining fighting ships are tied up at Halifax and Esquimalt for lack of sufficient trained personnel to man them. Looking at the army, we find that every unit posted overseas for duty, whether in Germany, Cyprus or the Middle East, must have its numbers brought up to strength by postings from the units remaining in Canada, leaving the latter at greatly reduced strength. Apparently, sufficient numbers for the infantry required in Cyprus could not be obtained by posting men from units of the same kind. When the Royal Canadian Regiment was posted there artillery personnel had to be sent to the island to make up the numbers.

This is all too reminiscent of the conditions which existed in late 1944 and 1945 during the last war in Europe when the manpower policies of the government of that day resulted in units engaged in northwestern Europe, particularly infantry units, being seriously under strength. The result was that men from other units of all kinds, untrained in infantry work, had to take on infantry jobs for which they were not prepared.

I myself was in command of an artillery unit which had to hold some 12 miles of the river Maas line and during that time we lost a considerable number of men, killed and wounded, primarily because they did not know what they were doing. They were required to do an infantry job, first driving the Germans across the river and then patrolling across it. They had not been trained for this work and this resulted in unnecessary loss of life. The situation existing today, where we find artillery men being sent to do an infantry job, is all too reminiscent, as I say, of what happened in those days, days which all who experienced them hoped we would never see again.

Turning to the R.C.A.F., let me say first of all that it is well known this branch of the service is now seriously short of pilots, a situation which may not be surprising in view of the fact that only a year ago the minister compulsorily retired 500 pilots, a monumental mistake as has now become apparent and as should have been clear at the time. Possibly hon. members do not realize that the cost of training these pilots runs from \$175,000 to \$200,000 per man or even more. But 500 pilots were summarily dismissed from the air force. Now a year later, we find ourselves seriously short of pilots.

Of course, in addition to the 500 who were dismissed a large number of air crew on short service commissions decided not to re-engage on the completion of their terms. Many others also requested discharge from the service because of factors I mentioned earlier, the low state of morale and the feeling that there was no future for them in the air force. A large number of these applications for discharge were accepted. The measure of the shortage of pilots in the air force at the present time is such that pilots in Europe are now reported to be putting in some 70 hours a week on duty. My information is that R.C.A.F. officers with engineering degrees filling supposedly vital jobs in the technical services have been taken from this work and returned to flying duty in order to keep the R.C.A.F. squadrons in the air. The question immediately arises: What is the state of efficiency of these technical services and how will they continue to operate effectively if men are to be drained away in this manner?

The minister has put out a great deal of propaganda to the effect that the changes he has instituted in the department will save a great deal of money. Most of the newspapers have accepted this propaganda and supported his programs on that basis. In actual fact, however, the amounts spent by the Department of National Defence have not declined. If we look through the estimates for the past five or six years we will see that the money estimated to be spent—in each case, of course, the estimate has been exceeded—was between \$1,525 million and \$1,590 million. In the current year which we are now considering the figure is \$1,550 million. According to the estimates tabled this week, for next year it is \$1,572 million. In other words, the minister has not saved any money.

He has continually tried to make the point that he would save a great deal of money on personnel and administrative expenses with the result that there would be more money available to provide new equipment. But so far as this year's estimates and expenditures are concerned the actual situation is that only about 12 per cent of the defence budget is to be put into new equipment, the smallest percentage in many years. In other words, the minister's claim that he would make savings in administration and personnel which could be devoted to the purchase of new equipment has not turned out to be justified.