

Supply—National Defence

government is now planning and doing is based upon production in 1961, 1962 and 1965. What the situation will be then we do not know. If we go back over the last few years we know that we have always faced the threat of war. I am going to be quite honest. If war is going to come there will not be six months, one year or five years notice of a war.

What intrigues me under this vote is the mobility of our Canadian army. Two years ago in an emergency the mobility of the Canadian forces was such that the R.C.A.F. could not move 133 militia personnel from St. John's to Petawawa. They could not do it in an emergency. What was the emergency? The men would not go on a certain type of plane and because they would not go on a certain type of plane the R.C.A.F. could not move these 133 men from St. John's to Petawawa as equipment was not available.

I think I heard the minister correctly last night and I think I have read what he said correctly. Dealing with the active armed forces in Canada, he said that we could not move one battalion with all its equipment in an emergency. What is a battalion? A battalion consists of not more than 1,000 men. So after \$1½ billion and \$2 billion a year over the years having been spent by this government and the previous government, right now in 1959 the Minister of National Defence says that in this day of possible spark war and fast moving emergency we cannot move one battalion with its equipment by air. We cannot move a battalion of 1,000 men.

Again, if I heard the minister correctly and read what he said correctly the minister said last night in reply to the Leader of the Opposition that it would take a long time and over \$300 million before we would be able to make a brigade immediately mobile in Canada. With all the money, all the hundreds of millions and billions of dollars that have been spent by the Canadian taxpayers, do you, sir, understand why I now direct a question to the Minister of National Defence when he stands up in the House of Commons and says that not until the end of this year or until the beginning of 1960 can we even move a battalion of 1,000 men in Canada, with their equipment, and that not even consideration has been given to the possibility of moving a brigade?

Yes, Mr. Chairman, the minister can look up because I heard what he said last night and as I could not believe his statement I read it again this morning in *Hansard*. He said that it will be the end of this year before the R.C.A.F. will be able to move a battalion with its equipment. Am I wrong? No. For what have we been spending these

[Mr. Winch.]

hundreds of millions and billions of dollars when we will not be able before the end of this year or the beginning of next to move 1,000 men of the armed forces with their equipment?

Mr. Pearkes: I wonder whether the hon. gentleman would give me the page from which he is quoting?

Mr. Winch: I do not have it right in front of me at the moment. I will produce it. I know it is there. The minister said a battalion and a battalion is 1,000 men. A battalion is 1,000 men, is it not? The minister also made a statement about the cost of moving a brigade with all its equipment.

But the most important thing to me at least is the matter of a Canadian mobile force available to the United Nations as a police force. I want to say to the Minister of National Defence that I was most disappointed, in fact almost heartbroken, with what he had to say last night in that there has been no request made for Canada to do this. How long would it take Canada to answer a request if it ever came? The answer there is clear. The only time a request was ever made to Canada was when a speech was made about the Middle East situation by the man who is now the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition at the time he was secretary of state for external affairs, and for which he got the Nobel prize.

What happened then? On the request being made to Canada, Canada made an immediate answer but how fast could we get the police force into the Middle East? With all the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been spent, do you know what we had to do in order to be able to send a battalion into the Middle East? We could not move them by air; we could not move them by ship. We had to spend thousands of dollars to dismantle an aircraft carrier and convert it into a troop ship to get this force to the Middle East. This took six weeks; that is right, and you all know it.

This was an example of our efficiency. This was an example of our preparation for an emergency. We had to take the *Magnificent*—I think that was the name of the ship—strip it and convert our only aircraft carrier into a troop ship. It took us six weeks to answer a request of the United Nations to send a force to the Middle East. Then, of course, we had to re-equip the aircraft carrier, that is convert it from a troop carrier to an aircraft carrier and then return it to the country from which we borrowed it.

This is a matter of record. What is our position now, as outlined by the minister? I should like to say to the Minister of National Defence that the greatest contribution Canada