

*Supply—National Defence*

signatories to the Atlantic pact, in the perspective we now have as a result of these recent events. What is our position today? It is easy to be beguiled into a feeling of comfortable assurance by impressive demonstrations—and they are impressive—unless one examines them against the broad background of the reality with which we are confronted.

When we see the members of our armed forces, we have reason for pride in the evidence of training, of discipline and of spirit that is shown by every one of these young men and women in the navy, the army and the air force. When we see any of the naval, army or air demonstrations we can only be impressed by the skill, the evidence of training and the high measure of discipline with which the duties assigned to these services are carried out. Nevertheless we must examine each of these demonstrations in proportion to the task that lies before us. When we consider how many active service squadrons we have in being, ready to take their part, we can only form an impression of their ability to share in the joint responsibility which we all now share when we consider how many squadrons of different types there are in the Russian air force and in the air forces of the nations which serve the orders of the Kremlin. When we see displays of the forces of the army, the same question must present itself; and so it is when we see displays of our naval forces, no matter how impressive they must be.

In the very nature of the rigid secrecy which Russia seeks to place around her own country and around all the satellite nations, exact figures are difficult to obtain, even for those with access to all the most secret intelligence information. Nevertheless, in responsible publications there have appeared figures based upon information which can be obtained from time to time and which probably does bear some reasonable relationship to the reality of the moment. From time to time Russians who have been in all the widely-separated parts of Russia have found their way out of that country through Berlin, and on other frontiers, and their information does become available. Whether these figures are exact or not, there have been published recently in the United States statements to the effect that at the present time the Russian air force has in being squadrons with some 9,000 jet fighters alone; also squadrons with thousands of bombers, and squadrons with at least 10,000 transports, and probably a great many more. There are also reliable estimates that their production, at a minimum, is 10,000 planes a year and probably far beyond that, with all the satellite areas under their control.

[Mr. Drew.]

From reliable information made public through the periodical magazines and the press, we have the fact that the Russian army is made up of forces in being with at least 2,600,000 men organized into 130 airborne and infantry divisions at least, and 30 armoured divisions at least. These 160 divisions are the Russian divisions alone. In addition to that are all the divisions organized in Poland, Roumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, China, and the other satellite nations. As a result of the technical assistance, to say nothing of the capital plant which the Russians were able to obtain by their occupation of eastern Germany, we also know that their submarine production is at a high level; that they probably have at the moment at least 300 of the most modern submarines, and that their production is constantly being accelerated.

It is against the reality of figures such as these that we must consider what is happening here and what is happening in the other free nations. We have seen magnificent demonstrations of aerobatics, of formation flying, and of other air skill carried out with Vampires of the late war type. We have seen demonstrations carried out with other aircraft. But the question that presents itself to each one of us now is this: How many squadrons have we in being equipped with fighters of the most modern kind ready to go into action against any enemy which might present itself? We know the answer. We know that we are still preparing, and that the equipment of our squadrons with the most modern type of fighter aircraft is still some distance away.

Again, in the case of our naval forces, the Minister of National Defence has stated, and stated correctly, that at the present time they are nearer to being on an active service basis than any of our other forces. But again their strength and their capacity to assume our share of the responsibility under the Atlantic pact must be measured in proportion to figures of this kind.

The same is true of our army formations. We have one brigade group and other units of various kinds. Even there we must ask how fully that brigade group is armed to carry out its responsibility as an active force in being.

There can be no question about the training of the men, no question about their skill, no question about the spirit in which they carry out their tasks. The question is, have they the equipment that makes them, by the most modern standards, an active service force in being?

In all this I am not suggesting for one moment that Canada can or should at any