

*Supply—National Defence*

company group per battalion, so that to send a battalion on winter training it had to borrow from other units.

The government of that time had no plans to change this shortsighted policy. And in the face of all this, hon. gentlemen opposite have the temerity to suggest that all that was needed in 1963 was another rubber stamp minister. I should hope not. The associate minister and I made decisions. We sought and obtained government approval for a sensible "new guard" defence policy for Canada, one which reflects the real world of today and tomorrow. And then we set out to implement the policy.

The new philosophy, put simply, is that Canada can make its greatest contribution to collective defence and world order by developing well equipped flexible, conventional forces, and providing the strategic mobility to move them quickly to meet emergencies anywhere in the world.

**Mr. Nielsen:** That Bill Lee is quite a writer.

**Mr. Hellyer:** That Bill Lee is quite a writer, and I can tell hon. gentlemen opposite they would do better to get some of their advice from him than some of the people they take it from. This new philosophy is one of emphasis and changing role. It does not preclude the fulfilment of those obligations previously undertaken and the utilization of the equipment purchased at staggering costs by the former government for those tasks. It does mean a shifting emphasis and a greatly increased capacity in an area where a Canadian contribution is a real addition.

I would like now to deal with some of the specific points included in the buckshot attack from the opposition benches.

**Mr. Churchill:** It got home, didn't it?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Pea shooter.

**Mr. Hellyer:** I guess pea shooter would be more appropriate, and popgun would be even better.

● (8:40 p.m.)

My statement that the R.C.N. anti-submarine capability is now the greatest in peacetime history was challenged. The challenge was based on the suggestion that because the fleet is smaller it is less effective and that the substitution of four destroyer escort helicopters—DDH's—and two support ships for eight general purpose frigates in the building program would be a further loss.

[Mr. Hellyer.]

It is simply not in accordance with the facts to suggest that it seriously degrades our operational ASW capability to pay off or lay up a number of over age world war II ships. The new DDH's and converted destroyer escorts have an ASW capability several times greater than the world war II ships. New techniques recently developed have greatly enhanced the anti-submarine surveillance capability. I am not able to give details to this committee but I will be happy to brief the Standing Committee on Defence. Information will be made available which will convince anyone who can be convinced by facts that my claim in respect to the navy's anti-submarine capability is incontrovertible.

The fact that the four DDH's in the shipbuilding program will carry heavy helicopters which the general purpose frigates were not designed to carry, will increase their anti-submarine capability greatly. The four DDH's, together with the two support ships will provide the fleet with several times the on-station ASW capability that the eight general purpose frigates would have provided, and at considerably less cost. Both in absolute terms, then, and on the basis of cost-effectiveness the paying off of world war II frigates and the substitution of the four DDH's and two support ships for eight frigates were good decisions.

The question of minesweepers was raised by the senior member for Halifax. This subject was dealt with by the former associate minister on January 8, 1964 when he said that studies of our strategic plans indicate that minesweeping is not considered to be a high priority task in relation to antisubmarine warfare. This same assessment still prevails. The probability of a conflict in which a potential enemy would mine Canadian coastal waters is extremely remote. Certainly a potential enemy would have to weigh the consequences of any such overt action and it seems very unlikely that he would risk all-out war through such an act.

Studies are continuing however in respect of the relative priority of minesweeping and also keeping abreast of technological developments in this area. New and more modern mines have been developed which would require extensive modifications of our existing minesweepers if they were to be successful at all in carrying out these tasks. In addition, new methods of sweeping are being developed.

At this time, minesweeping continues to be a very low priority operation. Consequently