

Supply—National Defence

Mr. Harkness: It is practically all travel?

Mr. Claxton: That is right.

Mr. Fulton: Will the minister give us the main headings of the increase in sundries? He gave me a break-down of what the sundries are, but they are increased from \$186,000 to \$783,000. Is that also accounted for by this inspection service business? If so, what are the main headings under which the expenses are increased?

Mr. Claxton: The increase was almost entirely due to increased inspection. The unallotted amount of \$338,227 is almost entirely provided for inspection services, and then there is an item of \$205,000 expressly for inspection services, let by outside contracts.

Mr. Hees: I think everybody in this country has come to realize the possibility, although we would hate to think that it ever could be a probability, of an attack on this country by land forces of an aggressor. At the present time, so far as I can see, we have a brigade group which could repel such an attack or make an attempt to repel such an attack. But I do not feel that a force of that size would have any appreciable effect on the kind of force that would be thrown against this country if such an eventuality developed. It seems to me, with my limited knowledge, that it would take a force of at least the size of an armoured division to do any sort of a job in repelling such an attack.

I do not think anybody would argue that it would take less than six months from a standing start, with no interference, to prepare an armoured division both from the point of view of equipping it and getting the men into the ranks and training them before an armoured division could go into action. Will the minister tell the committee what the plans of the Department of National Defence are for getting a force into the field in less time than six months to repel the possible invasion of this country if at any time an enemy should suddenly strike?

Mr. Claxton: This has been gone into a good many times. We do not estimate that there is any possibility of any attack on Canada except by an airborne force; and we believe that under existing conditions such a force could be dealt with, if it got to Canada, by an airborne brigade.

I do not know whether hon. members know how many aircraft it takes to make an airlift of an airborne brigade. It runs into hundreds. That being so our calculation is—and it is a calculation based on an estimate of risks, as all war planning must be—that the risk we have to meet is not that of an all-out attack on us but something that will be

launched with the view of panicking our people to deploy more of their forces here than they should. We believe if we start doing that we will be doing just what the only potential enemy wants before he ever lifts his finger to attack us.

Exercise Sweetbriar will, I believe, be found to show that the forces we have, if our estimate of the situation is right, are the right kind of forces to deal with such an attack.

Mr. Harkness: I notice the first item under the navy is "civilian salaries and wages." The amount is down about \$700,000 from last year, which I was rather surprised to see, because most of the items for salaries and wages in the various departments are up this year, to a large extent owing to the increased rates of pay that most civil servants are getting. I was also surprised to find this amount is down because one of the recommendations of the Mainguy report was that more of the administrative work such as the civilian employees would be engaged at should be done by civilian employees. In other words, one of the recommendations of the report was to increase the number of civilian employees, and thus release more naval officers for duties at sea, and so forth. In view of these two circumstances, namely, that pay is up in most departments, and that there was this recommendation that there should be an increase in the number of civilian employees and a decrease in the number of naval officers and men at headquarters, can the minister explain the situation?

Mr. Claxton: The decrease is due to the employment of a total of 6,331 civilians in all classes as against a total of 6,636 in 1949. Therefore it is due to a definite drop in the number of personnel involved, namely, 305. We have not found it possible to do much in the way of putting civilians in service positions at headquarters yet. It is a difficult operation, and I think probably the navy will be the service in which it is least easy to do it because of the particularly technical nature of its work. The decrease is due in part to economy in administration. I should say also that a very big proportion of those employed in the navy are prevailing rate employees in the dockyards, and that number fluctuates from month to month with the amount of work. As of the 31st day of March, when these figures were taken, the number employed there was 2,306 in Halifax, 1,777 at Esquimalt and lesser numbers at other places.