

Supply—National Defence

which the navy possesses would be too costly to refit for modern minesweeping due to the new type of mines being developed. I also gather from what he said that a Pearl Harbour type of war outbreak is considered unlikely by the department. At least, he stated:

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.

One could debate that statement but all I wish to do is to ask whether there is any equipment available to the navy by which mines, if found, could be removed from coastal waters?

Mr. Hellyer: At the moment we do not have any minesweeping capability for the reasons I gave. It is true to say that conditions could arise where we might need minesweeping capability but the probability is extremely low. All of our expenditures and roles are chosen on the basis of probability. It is just like taking out insurance of any kind. You have to insure against the greatest risk and this involves a matter of judgment. Although there is not unanimity, in the judgment of the majority of the people who have studied these matters the probability is rather low. The hon. gentleman is quite right that the ships we now have in reserve would require extensive alterations in order to sweep modern mines but it is not felt that the probability is sufficiently high to justify the expenditure.

As I indicated, we have asked for another study to make sure there is no significant change in thinking since that decision was made. For example, some experiments have been carried out in sweeping mines with helicopters. Is this a real possibility? I cannot tell my hon. friend whether or not it is effective because I have not got the information on which to base a reply. But I know some experiments were carried out and we are examining the matter to see what new techniques have been devised.

Mr. Crouse: I should like to direct a brief question to the minister. I am not certain if the subject comes under this item and if it does not perhaps he can direct me to the correct item. It deals with the movement of the Albro Lake signal station from Dartmouth to Mill Cove in Lunenburg County. When the Conservative government was in power it was decided to move this station

[Mr. McCleave.]

due to the fact that there was too much interference with the signal in the Dartmouth area. In the past year progress has been rather slow in this matter and I would ask the minister whether the transfer has now been completed, what is the total amount of money his department intends to spend in this area, the approximate date when construction will be completed, and when the final movement will be made from Albro Lake to Mill Cove?

Mr. Hellyer: I shall try to get that information and give it to my hon. friend.

Mr. Starr: Is the minister prepared to give answers to the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition with respect to cars in Ottawa?

• (5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Hellyer: We are trying to get the information on that. The Leader of the Opposition also asked for the names of the servicemen who were retired and who were referred to in the Auditor General's report. These are Wing Commander W. G. Taylor, Flight Sergeant J. C. Baker, Lieutenant Colonel W. M. Alton, Major R. W. Hampton, Sergeant D. W. Hopkinson and Flight Sergeant C. F. Page. These six persons involved were recruited in the non-permanent active militia in the ranks between 1926 and 1933 when Kings Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Militia, 1926, authorized enlistment of boys between 14 and 18 years of age and in special cases at the age of 13. In the cases in question the fact that the men served in the militia during the periods claimed, in other words, that they were in fact enrolled under age, was supported by statutory declarations from the contributors themselves and in each case from independent persons who also signed statutory declarations to the same effect.

There is one other bit of information on this same subject. As hon. gentlemen probably know, until 1947 one-half of militia service could be counted for retirement purposes. The law was changed, I think in 1947, to reduce that to one-quarter of militia service that could be counted. The member of the armed forces might elect to count the service within one year of becoming a contributor under the Act.

Mr. Fairweather: In other words, what the minister is saying, on the basis of the Auditor General's report, is that some people whom he has named and whose names I will not repeat in effect have committed perjury. I am wondering whether procedures are going to