

Supply—National Defence

The next point I should like to refer to is the use of helicopters for anti-submarine work, and in that connection I should like to quote an extract from the debate on the naval estimates in the United Kingdom. I refer again to the remarks of Mr. Ward who had this to say, as found at page 2335 of the weekly *Hansard* of the British House of Commons:

The next point I want to deal with is the use of the helicopter for underwater warfare. It is proving very efficient at operating an asdic set from the air, free from ship noises and practically free from effective retaliation by the submarine.

Apparently the United Kingdom navy is already using helicopters for this purpose, and I would hope the minister would take into consideration the hurrying up of their use here. Helicopters are relatively cheap compared with expensive destroyers. They are not vulnerable to any attack and they are free from ship noises at sea so far as the detection of submarines is concerned. They can also be operated from the shore. Their only limitation is, of course, the weather.

The next matter I should like to deal with briefly is the fact that we must realize the danger from the Arctic. As I have already mentioned, if trouble arises there is great probability of the Soviet setting up bases in the Arctic. It has always been said that we cannot be attacked from there, that it is too difficult to use equipment. That is the same type of thinking some admirals and generals had with regard to Singapore. They said that any attack must come from the sea, that it could not come down the Malay peninsula. All hon. members know what happened. I re-emphasize that there are dangers of attack from the north. I should like to know whether our present ships can operate adequately in Arctic waters both in winter and summer months. I know that the atmospheric conditions, the fact that it is dark in the winter months and also that the water freezes would certainly limit the operations of the ships we have at present, and also the operations of aircraft.

If by some chance the Russians were able to set up bases on Arctic islands or on ice islands we would have to have some way of dealing with them. As the minister pointed out in his remarks this afternoon, it is very difficult and apparently not always too satisfactory to drop troops from aircraft in Arctic areas. There are limitations. I am also informed by people who should know that there would be certain difficulties in operating aircraft in severe winter and stormy conditions. It might be necessary to use naval ships of a special design in order to land troops in those areas to deal with any temporary Soviet bases that might be set

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

up there. I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the government take into consideration the forming of a small, compact marine force in conjunction with the Royal Canadian Navy to be used for this purpose.

In this same regard, Mr. Chairman, it would be very unrealistic to expect our ships to operate in the Arctic without bases. I think it very important that some type of naval base, not large but adequate to deal with destroyers, be set up in the Hudson bay area. I think it is important that we have a naval base in the Hudson bay area and possibly one or two farther north. These would have to be selected very carefully. From these bases helicopters could be operated, as well as destroyers and this small marine corps I have suggested. If bases were set up in time of emergency by an enemy such as the Soviet, then we could deal with them even if our air force were hampered by weather conditions.

I have only one or two more remarks to make in connection with this question of using helicopters. Helicopters do not need to operate from an aircraft carrier. They can operate from small, cheaply constructed ships. I think the minister should consider the advisability of constructing quite a number of small ships that could carry three or four helicopters, whatever number is considered necessary, and these ships could be used in defence of our Atlantic coast, on Hudson bay and in other waters. They could be anchored in inlets and used as permanent bases, and when necessary could be used at sea to check up on submarines. The helicopter has a great advantage, and is far less costly when compared to a destroyer. These small ships could be cheaply constructed and would not be anything like the expense of an aircraft carrier.

I think that is something that should be considered. I know it is an unorthodox idea, but when you have certain specific conditions with which to deal, as we have in this country, some unorthodox ideas should be considered. It may be that they will not work, but they should be considered.

The other question concerns these 25 destroyer escorts that we will ultimately have. No doubt the government considers that they should be added but in my opinion the day of the convoy, as we knew it in the last war, is gone. Any large concentration of ships would be a prize target for any kind of thermonuclear bomb. Any convoy work would have to be done on the dispersal principle. I have no doubt that has been considered. In view of the great expense of these new destroyers, I understand nearly \$18 million each, some other method may have to be used to help protect the sea lanes. As