

Supply—National Defence

least be given the details of what the cost has been and what the future of the hydrofoil project is expected to be.

One other matter I should like to ask the minister about, I do not know whether any of my colleagues have raised it or not, is this. There is a considerable amount of wonderment and disquiet in the services, I am led to believe, over the provision in the new defence act that for 60 days after that act is proclaimed members of the forces will be given the chance to retire from the armed services. I think the minister owes it to the members of the armed services, as well as to the members of this committee, to state in exact terms what the situation is in this connection.

I know that there are several other members who wish to say something, Mr. Chairman, and as it is now 25 minutes to ten I will conclude my remarks at this point. However, I hope that before the debate is completed the minister will answer some of the questions that have been asked.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Chairman, the remarks that I want to make tonight will also be brief. I ask the indulgence of the members of the committee if I touch on a number of matters rather than stay with one specific subject as others have done.

My first remarks are phrased in the form of a question to the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra. I simply ask the hon. member, since what he said earlier this evening was so exciting to him and the members of the government, why it was that they sent the navy to sea a few days prior to the provincial election in the province from which I come.

I suggest that if he is guilty of the charge that I level against him, all he has done by what he has said during this discussion of the estimates has been to give further emphasis to the point that has been made, not only by myself and other members in the chamber but by people outside the House of Commons. I refer to the necessity for serious and drastic changes in the armed services voting regulations, changes which would bring about for the armed services of Canada some degree of secrecy for their franchise. What the hon. member is doing when he stands up and recites the voting habits of the members of the armed services is simply indicating to the people of Canada their political affiliations, and I submit this is immoral and is wrong.

Another question I want to raise was touched on by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra and the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, though they referred to it in different ways. It centres around the

question of Canada's neutrality in the eyes of the world today. I had hoped that by the time the defence estimates came before this committee the evidence given to the external affairs committee at their third meeting would have been available to us, because during that meeting there was a rather interesting exchange between the members of the committee and one Mr. Charles Taylor, a very distinguished correspondent of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

I should like to paraphrase what he said in part in response to specific questions about the attitude of countries like mainland China to Canada because he was quite positive in his reply. He indicated to the members of the committee that if the government of mainland China thinks about Canada at all it is either in the context of agriculture or in the context of our being merely spokesmen for and representatives of the western point of view as expressed by the United States.

I suggest that in this world today we are not neutral. I do not see how we can be. I do not think it is going too far to suggest that it is a little immoral to declare that we are. It is wrong to suggest that we can try and impose on the world the idea that we are neutral, because we are not. We adhere to the principles of democracy as espoused and practised by western countries. We believe in peace. In what way are we neutral, Mr. Chairman?

I think it has been suggested that Canada can adopt some quasineutral role which can be expressed to the world in the form of some energetic contribution to peace keeping. If I may paraphrase what the minister said earlier this afternoon in his opening remarks, he said that Canada believes in and works consistently toward permanent peace keeping machinery for the United Nations.

This may be a desirable role, but I think that the vehicle the minister has chosen—that is, the preparation in Canada of that peace keeping machinery which would be used as the lead instrument and for the primary disposal of the United Nations—is perhaps a little grandiose in conception at this particular stage of our history.

I should now like to pass to other matters of concern and develop a little further some of the questions asked of the minister about the *Bonaventure*.

• (9:40 p.m.)

I am curious to know where we are to get a crew for the ship. I am more seriously concerned at the moment about other aspects, particularly about some of the details of the