

*Supply—Transport*

concern arises from the fact that under present arrangements they understand they may have to make a long and in some cases expensive journey to a centre such as Vancouver or Victoria in order to write the examination, and they do not think that should be necessary. I believe this points up something to which the minister referred, namely, that the number of personnel available to carry on this work in the department is not really adequate to cope with the greatly increased use being made of radio facilities, and in my opinion consideration should be given to a fairly large increase in the arrangements and facilities that are provided. Whether that could be done in co-operation with one of the other departments of government such as the Department of Fisheries, I do not know, but I do know that the fishermen in the coastal areas have been accustomed, so far as their actual dealings with the Department of Fisheries are concerned, to having a fisheries officer somewhere within reasonable reach.

I do not need to expand on that point. I assume the minister understands that the Department of Fisheries has its officers stationed in the various fishing areas. If an examination system is to be instituted I believe that some arrangement should be developed whereby, through access to someone stationed permanently in the fishing area or through some arrangement whereby the appropriate officials would go to the fishermen, the necessity for taking these long journeys to a centre such as Vancouver would not arise. I have attempted to outline some of the matters that have been brought to my attention, and I would appreciate it if at some point in the discussion of the minister's estimates he would make a statement with respect to any developments taking place by way of policy in the administration of this particular aspect of his department.

This morning the minister made some reference to the program of vessel replacement which his department is carrying on. I believe he dealt principally with the matter of icebreakers, but his mention of this question brought to my mind a suggestion I should like to put forward. I suggest that consideration should be given, and I think it could be given within the confines of the Department of Transport, to the development of some sort of integrated program for the supply of government vessels.

From references I have heard, I know there are a great many types of government vessels in operation, with a great many types of engines. It appears to me that over the course of years various departments of

government have acquired vessels at different times and under different conditions. The result apparently is that, where repairs are necessary, in many cases unnecessary delays are involved because there is no central depot, no standardization of the type of motors and no arrangement whereby parts for vessels from one department are interchangeable with vessels of another department. I think that is a matter of policy that could very well come under the consideration of the Minister of Transport. He may naturally be obliged to consult with his colleagues in other departments where vessels are in operation but I feel that in that field there is an opportunity to effect a considerable saving of public funds and at the same time to increase the efficiency of the operations of the vessels that are on our coasts.

While I am not going to develop this subject at the moment I feel that consideration should be given—as I mentioned in an earlier speech in this session—to the question of having proper rescue equipment on all of these vessels operated by the various departments of the government. I know that the minister's department operates vessels—perhaps I should not dignify them by that term—which are allocated to the rescue service. I therefore believe that within his department he must have facilities for giving this particular matter some consideration.

There is one other matter upon which I should like to touch briefly, Mr. Chairman. It relates to the question that was raised by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra this morning with respect to the recent loss of the Department of Public Works vessel *Hilunga*. The question that I should like to have answered is whether or not that vessel encountered a storm without warning when she embarked upon that particular voyage. If that is the case, I would say it points out the inadequacies of our present weather forecasting system on the Pacific coast. From my own observation I would say that the efficiency of our weather reporting on the coast has declined since the years during the war when, I imagine, a good deal of the information was being provided by various operations under the Department of National Defence. I know that last fall, I myself had a little experience of the arrival of unexpected weather. I was travelling out to one of the more exposed points on the west coast of Vancouver island in a light plane and we found ourselves faced with the onslaught of some rather gusty weather. To put it mildly, the situation was somewhat uncomfortable. The adequacy of our present facilities for detecting the onslaught of weather on the west coast comes into question when one hears of a situation like the one which