

*National Defence Act Amendment*

testimony of General Moncel about how enthusiastic they were about integration, how many plans were drawn up, and how they were pressing on with integration. In this connection I think I shall read from the committee evidence to show the attitude of some of these gentlemen.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Committee report No. 35, page 2290, illustrates the attitude of Air Chief Marshal Miller who was chief of staff until just six months ago and is now being subjected to this sort of statement which is supported by members of the Liberal party. As recorded at page 2290 of the proceedings Air Chief Marshal Miller said:

I do not think anybody is ever completely satisfied with an organization. We made very many changes in our first integrated organization we set up, I imagine that they are still making changes. However, the large basic organizational frame is there, and I think it is a good one as far as an integrated defence staff is concerned.

Here we have Air Chief Marshal Miller praising the steps taken to date. This does not sound like somebody who is reactionary. A little farther down on the same page he is recorded as saying:

I certainly believed what was in the white paper, which said that integration was the first step. I had never heard, during my tenure, all the implications on unification spelled out. It had been something that was held up as the end result, but in my understanding of it, there was no particular hurry over it, and the important thing was to get the integration organization going, and that we would then have a chance to look at integration in a more leisurely better organized way.

I do not know how anyone can suggest that this is a reactionary attitude. At page 2291 of the proceedings Air Chief Marshal Miller said:

On the principle of integration, my own feelings about it are that it might very well be the end result.

I believe the word he meant there was unification.

I do not think it is timely now. I have felt that the problem of integration and getting the organization, if you like, was the area where the biggest return in manpower savings and in effective control of military lay, and it was important to get that right before we had ventured into the areas of unification.

The area of unification is a very sensitive one, as you well know. It strikes at the traditions and the feelings of a lot of people. I did not see, up until the time I left, that the return from pressing the unification sign was commensurate with the disruption and the great concern to the man in uniform that would result from it.

[Mr. Nugent.]

That is the attitude of Air Chief Marshal Miller and I suggest it shows the falseness of the argument in Mr. King's article. Mr. King started his article by stating that he did not have much experience in this field, and I am sure he has been led astray by the arguments of the minister and his supporters.

The attitude of Air Marshal Annis can be found in volume 23 of the committee proceedings at page 1378:

While I do not think there is yet sufficient favourable evidence to justify totally abolishing the three services, I do believe integration is the right direction in which the service should be moving and pressing their research to move further.

What nonsense is this spouted by the hon. member for Leeds who says that people who are against unification are against progress? Can the hon. member tell us he has read that evidence and similar statements by other witnesses who were pressing on with integration and trying to make it work? For a man to stand up in this house and say such a thing is not being fair to these people. He is even dishonest when he suggests that those who oppose unification are against progress.

As recorded on the same page Air Marshal Annis said this about unification:

I think that unification, certainly at this stage, without a lot more preparation, could be achieved but it would mean destroying most of the combat capabilities and versatility now, or at least until recently, existing or inherent in the Royal Canadian Navy. I think it would mean destroying in the longer term the ability of the unified force to retain a meaningful air combat capability or, in fact, any significant combat capability except for ground attack.

His attitude can be seen in other comments. I quote from the bottom of page 1382:

—I would suggest that we experiment thoroughly with integration of the supporting forces including performance tests—and I could talk about that for quite a while because it is very important. And having experimented thoroughly with how far one can go with integration of the supporting forces and whether or not in an integrated form they can give adequate response to the chief of naval, army or air, in their combat roles, then make a decision of whether to go on to unification. I still think unification might be possible—it could very well be—but we do not know.

Can you ask for a fairer attitude, Mr. Chairman? How can you have anything more dishonest than the argument that a gentleman who is using that sort of language is opposed to progress because he is opposed to unification? What he is saying is, "We want to make integration work, but to do our best unification right now is wrong." He gave us his reasons, and they were very honest reasons, when he appeared before the committee.