

National Defence Act Amendment

You remember Mr. Chairman, his dream, his vision of a great commonwealth—

To go on:

Unfortunately, his balloon sprung a leak over Asia, notably in Pakistan where misery, riots and anti-parliamentary governments showed him a thing or two on the hazards of a common policy—

But there was also Mr. Howe, this satyr of trade and finance who had left his indelible imprint on the direction of our economy.

Mr. Diefenbaker decided that any trace of that man had to disappear, and he hurriedly announced a drastic 15 per cent reorientation of our international trade. In terms of political economy, it was very odd; but Great Britain made as though it played the game by proposing a free-trade system between our two countries.

● (4:40 p.m.)

There was also Mr. St. Laurent, one of the main architects of NATO and, who, in another field, was responsible for the repatriation of part of the Canadian constitution by amendment No. 2 of 1949. To outdo as fast as possible the achievements of the former liberal leader on strategic matters, Mr. Diefenbaker hurriedly led us into certain commitments towards NORAD with such an ill-considered zeal that our country finds itself in a state of military dependence which brings it back 100 years. And now, in the constitutional field, Mr. Diefenbaker announces that he will repatriate—

I spare you the rest, Mr. Chairman, but I wind up Mr. Trudeau's article, and I have many others anyway. Therefore I quote:

In all those instances, and in many others, those were generous measures but—one must regret it—they remained for the most part, just good intentions. They were balloons filled with hot air and pushed by the wind which invariably crashed with their operator before going too far.

Mr. Diefenbaker's good intentions have failed so often that we are justified to find in them the very nature of his style—

And he has not changed, as you will note.

—now, as Buffon said, the style is the man himself. Thinking that inspiration does for reflection, he lacks the patience or the modesty to hurry slowly, he does not find it necessary to gather around him men able to establish the Canadian policy on deeprooted reason.

I will spare the house this quotation and go on.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Asselin, Richmond-Wolfe): Will the hon. member allow the hon. member for Rosthern to ask him a question?

Mr. Prud'homme: When I have concluded my remarks, Mr. Chairman. I come now to retired officers.

Mr. Graftey: He was giving his support to the New Democratic Party at that time.

[Mr. Prud'homme.]

Mr. Prud'homme: Yes, and that goes to prove the open-mindedness of the Liberal party; he saw the light and joined the Liberal party. What can I do about it?

You know, Mr. Chairman, some people spend their lives dreaming. As for him, he is a practical man. He knew he could build something concrete, he realized that only within the Liberal party he could make his fair contribution to the greatness of this country, Canada, and that is why he joined the Liberal party. That also is the reason why the hon. member for Hochelaga became a member of the Liberal party, and that goes for the Quebec leader also. What is wrong with that?

The Progressive Conservatives cannot do that because they would rather look to the past than to the future.

I quote the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, when he said at the beginning of his remarks on April 5, 1967—

Mr. Graftey: They are only good opportunists.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi wants to, he can tell it himself to the Minister of Justice who will surely reply.

I ask the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi to note the essential difference between the Liberal and Conservative parties. I therefore quote the member for Winnipeg South Centre who said on Wednesday April 5, 1967:

I begin, by expressing my regret that in our centennial year we should be involved in a debate such as this. During centennial year, we are emphasizing the history and traditions of our country in every hamlet—

I will read no further, Mr. Chairman. But when the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre rose to speak and set forth his theory on Canada, my speech was ready and I wanted to rise and say:

As we enter the second century of our existence, we must come up with bills such as the one proposed to us by the defence minister, which are oriented toward the future, without necessarily disavowing the past.

But the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre was consistent with himself and with the policy of his party, which is to look to the past and ignore the world in which we live. He is consistent with the policy of his party. I do not blame him for it, I am not insulting him. Let us not disturb him, for he is listening carefully.