

Interim Supply

Mr. Hees: Our purpose must be to help preserve world peace, and this can be done by demonstrating to those who might be tempted to try to achieve their objective by waging war that they would suffer more than they would gain by doing so. I think we all know that the first two world wars would never have started if the aggressors in each case had believed those who would be their adversaries had the courage, morale and fortitude to resist in a way that would cause those aggressors more trouble than they could cause. There were miscalculations in each case.

● (4:20 p.m.)

There must never be another miscalculation. If there never is, there will never be a third world war. We have a very important part to play in seeing that another world war does not start. The best way to make sure that one does start is to make it clear to our potential adversaries that we are not prepared to take our place in the line and do our duty effectively. That seems to be the objective of this minister and of this government. It is a disgraceful objective.

Mr. Chairman, if war is to be avoided in the future, we and our allies must be able to convince our potential enemies that we can cause them more damage than they could if they attacked us. It is just as simple as that. The main reason why there has been no atomic warfare in the world today is that the potential aggressors know perfectly well that the atomic might of the United States could deal a blow many times greater than it would receive. It is this simple logic which is keeping atomic peace in the world, and heaven help us if it does not in the future. I believe that it will.

To play our full part in helping to maintain world peace, we must maintain effective armed forces in proportion to our wealth and to our population.

Mr. Hellyer: May I ask my hon. friend a question?

Mr. Hees: I will be glad to answer the minister after I have completed my statement because my time is limited.

We cannot allow someone else to protect us and at the same time maintain our self respect and our influence in the community of nations. Enabling our country to play such a role must be the objective of the training and maintenance of our armed forces. In order to play an effective part in helping to maintain world peace, our forces must be capable of winning objectives which are allotted to them

in the event of another major conflict. We must remember that our potential enemies have accurate knowledge of what is going on in the countries of the free world, just as we have accurate knowledge of what is going on in their countries. If our preparedness is known to be ineffective, and I believe it will become known as ineffective if the minister's scheme of unification goes through, then our contribution in helping to preserve world peace will be greatly reduced. It will be known that we are a weak link in the allied defence chain.

Our enemies will then be that much more tempted to attack and to try to obtain their objectives through armed force than if they knew that the whole line is strong and ready to repulse them in a much more effective manner than they could strike us. It is the very simple technique of the bully who does not take on someone stronger than himself.

Canadians are generally very proud of their armed forces and that is why they are very upset by the measure which the minister and the government have introduced. They want to ensure that their forces are effective and that their effectiveness is of the very highest order. As tax payers, they want to make sure that the operation of these armed forces is economical. If changes are to be made, they want to make sure that those changes are necessary and that such decisions as are made are sound.

For these reasons, it is imperative that this bill be examined by the defence committee before parliament is asked to decide on the principle. We can only pass judgment on the principle of the bill when the information which tells us whether it is a good or bad principle is made available to us. It is only the appearance of the Minister of National Defence and of his associates before the committee on defence, which can make that information available to us.

If we do not get it, second reading of this bill is a sham and a futile exercise. We were not sent down here by our constituents to do this sort of thing.

It is ridiculous for the Prime Minister to say, as he said yesterday, that the procedure we have suggested would kill the bill. Of all the fatuous statements I have ever heard that is one of the greatest, and I have heard quite a number of them since returning to this house a year ago. I have heard them from right across the aisle. This procedure which we have suggested was used with great