

National Defence Act Amendment

I asked the minister about this and he went into all sorts of evasions about time phases. He said it depended on how many helicopters we have and he actually said that they had not computed the cost of developing a mobile defence force. He said he did not know what the cost would be, but that it would depend on various contingencies. It was my expectation that with his organizational mind and his computers, he would have worked out precisely what this new concentration would cost. The vice chairman of the defence staff, Air Marshal Sharp, made it perfectly clear that the whole new concept into which unification is supposed to fit is a concentration on this mobile role. In spite of that, we are told the cost has not been worked out.

Sometimes in this field, we have to repeat ourselves to get a point across, and although this is a repetition I should like to say to the minister that it will not be possible to build up an effective mobile force and at the same time maintain all the existing roles efficiently keeping within a budget ceiling of something like \$1.5 billion. So the minister must make a choice. So far he has failed to do so, and this vitiates the whole defence policy for which he and this government stand.

I do not think when we are debating unification I should partake in an elaborate examination of each of the different roles involved or explain how and why they are inadequate, but I should like to call the attention of this committee to a statement made by General Allard, the present chief of our general staff. This is a striking statement. He was being questioned about an article written by John Gellner which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* magazine on February 4, 1967. This article is in reference to Canada's defence and Mr. Gellner, dealing first of all with the plan for a mobile intervention force, said this:

According to plan, within three years Canada will have a fully mobile intervention force of 15,000, equipped with the best modern weapons. This represents considerable power, especially when it can be applied quickly, and in a preventive role.

I take it Mr. Gellner was not writing from a figment of the imagination when he said there was a plan for an intervention force of 15,000 which would be fully mobile. Such a force is bound to cost money. Mr. Gellner goes on to deal with our existing commitments to NATO, and he says:

It should be realized, and undoubtedly it is realized in Ottawa, that militarily the value of the Canadian contribution is minimal. It was contracted at a time when NATO planning was based on the assumption that a war in Central Europe could be

[Mr. Brewin.]

a limited nuclear war and that the enemy could thus be deterred by the weapons of limited nuclear war. This theory could never have withstood serious examination; by now nobody in a responsible position inside or outside of NATO really believes in its validity.

Yet for a variety of reasons, mostly political, it still determines NATO's deployment. This means Canada now has 126, and will have 108, CF-104 Starfighters standing unprotected on huge air bases (within range of Soviet nuclear missiles no doubt zeroed-in on them) and a brigade group prepared to manoeuvre on a nuclear battlefield, supported by a battery of short-range (15 miles or so) nuclear Honest John rockets designed to act much like ordinary artillery pieces (except for their incomparably greater power).

All this is of no use, as it presumes to deter a kind of war the Soviets have repeatedly declared they have no intention of fighting, and the French have said they will not allow to be fought in central Europe.

Mr. Gellner goes on in this article to deal with another aspect of this matter, that is our air defence. I will not read this all, but he does write the following:

This has to be borne in mind when one stands rather puzzled on one of our two Bomarc surface-to-air missile bases and sees 28 of these weapons standing virtually unprotected yards apart on a single pad, ready to repel a bomber attack. If attack ever came, the whole Bomarc complex would probably be taken out in the enemy's first surprise strike.

With a little foresight, the Bomarcs could have been recognized for the military absurdities they were when installed in 1961. Yet we took them, had to take them, simply because our two Bomarc bases formed a link in a chain of similar U.S. installations.

It is about time we stood on our own feet in respect of defence and thought out for ourselves what was useful for Canada, rather than getting ourselves involved in what Mr. Gellner here describes as military absurdities. The government says it is forward looking, but when it comes to action it continues the inertia so typical of it, doing exactly what was done in the 1950's, with practically no change.

On March 15 the Secretary of State for External Affairs, when discussing our commitments to NATO, said this to a committee of the other place:

The specific form of our contribution is under continuing review and has, in fact, changed significantly over the years. One example will, I think, suffice to illustrate my point. In the middle fifties, Canada provided twelve squadrons of F-86 interceptor aircraft to NATO. These were replaced in the early sixties by eight squadrons of F-104 aircraft, six squadrons of which had a strike role and two a reconnaissance role. This year, as a result of attrition, we are reducing the number of squadrons of strike aircraft from eight to six. At some time in the 1970's, all the F-104 aircraft