

*National Defence Act Amendment*

three brief sections from an editorial which appeared in *The Legionary* regarding this particular matter. I do not intend to read this consecutively, but will pick out portions here and there. In doing so, however, I am sure I will not be doing a disservice to the entire article:

The Legion's request was contained in a letter to Prime Minister Pearson, dated August 26, from Donald M. Thompson, the Dominion Secretary and read as follows:

"The members of the Royal Canadian Legion have always taken a keen interest in developments affecting Canada's defence forces. One of the purposes and objects included in our Act of Incorporation states: ...to strive for peace, good will and friendship among all nations, at the same time advocating the maintenance by Canada of adequate and sufficient forces on land, sea and in the air for the defence of our country."

I shall now skip two paragraphs:

"We have been deeply concerned at some of the public statements which have been made lately, both by those opposing and those proposing complete unification of the Canadian forces. In spite of our best efforts to understand the situation we are compelled to say that, because of the lack of authoritative, clearcut information and explanation we find ourselves unable at this moment to form a sound judgment on the whole question.

The Royal Canadian Legion is not interested in the partisan politics which appear to be developing in connection with this question."

At this point I shall move down to the next paragraph:

"The Royal Canadian Legion urges your government to make clear, without further delay, the detailed plans connected with the integration, and particularly the proposed unification, of the forces so that the judgments made by Canadian organizations and citizens will be based on frank and comprehensive official information and fact, not on rumour and supposition, as seems to be largely the case at the present time."

So it is evident from this editorial that the Canadian Legion was very perturbed over the fact that although there had been a great deal of discussion and debate, and many statements made for and against, they had not been given the necessary information upon which to base their own conclusion and decide whether the program was or was not worth while. I shall not take the time to read the statements made by Admiral Landymore, but I should like to refer to pages 6 and 9 of the brief he prepared for the committee on national defence. Here he states his concern that sufficient information has not been given to enable them to arrive at intelligent decisions and recommendations. There was a lot of talk about unification and integration, but as far as unification is concerned there was nothing to indicate just what the minister had

in mind. This was one of the things which really disturbed Rear Admiral Landymore. He stated that this disturbed his officers and his men. While I do not agree with his attitudes, his words, his actions or his influence, I realize there was some excuse for his position. Perhaps this could all have been avoided by some clear-cut statement of policy on the part of the minister.

● (6:40 p.m.)

The minister must be blamed therefore for allowing this state of uncertainty to exist for so long. The natural consequence of that was the building up of resentment and antagonism. This would not have occurred if accurate information had been given to those vitally concerned. In this way the rumours, reports, misinformation and misstatements would have been eliminated.

The minister must also be blamed for proceeding so far in the implementation of this policy, which has not as yet been approved by this parliament. The hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) stressed this point to a considerable degree, so I will not refer to it further. I do believe the minister must be blamed in this regard, and that he should not have proceeded so far before obtaining the approval of this parliament.

We are in support of the principles of the bill and unification. Let me refer to a statement of Social Credit objectives, principles and policies which was published I believe in 1958. This is Social Credit policy, so I should like to put it on record here. Let me quote from page ten of this booklet which states that the Social Credit party in respect of national defence would adopt—

(a) A realistic defence policy based on the following premises:

(1) Canada is and intends to remain a non-aggressor nation.

(2) Canada's geographical factors and small population make sustained effective defence against a major aggressor impossible without the aid of other nations.

(b) Having regard to these facts, a Social Credit government would:

(1) Re-design Canada's defence strategy and military forces to eliminate useless expenditures on forms of defence obsolete in the light of modern circumstances.

(2) Concentrate on establishing powerful well-equipped, highly mobile forces strategically deployed and capable of immediate airborne transport to any area of Canada.

Having supported a statement of policy such as this it would be difficult for us to turn around, even if we had any desire to do so,