

National Defence Act Amendment

confusing to people to have these contradictions.

Mr. Matheson: What is the next question?

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Chairman, what is the hon. member for Leeds asking now?

Mr. Matheson: Is there any other question?

Mr. Nesbitt: Yes, there are several more questions. I would ask the hon. member to just contain himself. I might add, in the same vein, that after his speech in the house on the purpose of this force, when the Secretary of State for External Affairs told us that the whole purpose of the force was that we could more effectively carry out our present foreign affairs commitments, the other day in the external affairs committee he made the announcement—it was really more a statement to a press conference than to the committee—that he was going to offer troops for Viet Nam, should they be required, for peace keeping.

In view of what General Allard has said, and editorials which have appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*, which is often thought of as the spokesman for the government—and for good reasons—editorials which have appeared in the *Globe and Mail* and other prominent newspapers, and the fact that the Secretary of State for External Affairs mentioned this offer of troops for peace keeping, it is not unreasonable that people would think that the new force is designed only for United Nations service. What else could a person think?

The next question concerns the matter of saving money. I agree that when it comes to the country's safety the saving of money is not the all-important factor. It is important enough, certainly, but it is not the all-important factor. The saving of money has been one of the reasons the minister has given for wishing to have this bill passed.

• (6:50 p.m.)

Air Chief Marshal Miller said in effect that there was no particular financial advantage to unification. Then we find in the estimates for the present fiscal year, starting April 1 of this year, that \$115 million more is being spent on the armed forces. These estimated expenditures are based on the assumption that the unification bill will go through. Various government members have tried to explain away the \$115 million. The explanation of the hon. member for Peterborough as reported at page

14630 of *Hansard* was most entertaining when he said:

Hon. members should consider for a few moments the effects of inflation upon a relatively constant budget over a six year period.

This just goes on to show the problems one can sometimes get into in the house by trying to make excuses for one action of the government, and blunder into a rather unfortunate admission regarding other activities of the government, in this case in the field of the control of the cost of living.

But despite all the explanations—and I know some hon. members have said that it might be more expensive if we did not have unification—we have not had an adequate explanation of the \$115 million increase. Hon. members can say that the ratio of defence spending has decreased in proportion to the total government expenditure, and other such explanations can be made, but the fact is that defence is still costing more. I do not think it is a matter of all importance, but it is certainly a matter of some importance.

Then there was one question which the minister has not answered, and it is this: Will this new unified force have to be trained in all three services? I think General Allard referred to them, rather unfortunately, as finks, that is flying infantrymen with naval knowledge. How in these days of specialization are these people suddenly to carry out purely army type duties with our NATO allies? This has never been explained. I believe some months ago a question was put to the minister asking whether there could be an interchange between army and naval officers, and he replied that there is no reason that a gunnery officer in the army could not take on general duties in the navy. Superficially this looks possible, but there are certain duties that naval gunnery officers have to carry out, such as shiphandling and navigation, which an army officer could not perform.

The Deputy Chairman: I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to his speech has expired.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Chairman, I am prompted to make a few comments at this time because of the attempt by the hon. member for Oxford to denigrate, besmirch and generally tarnish the provisions of standing order 15-A. He advanced the most amazing argument I have ever heard. He tried to argue that because he did not receive satisfactory answers, and I presume agreeable answers, to the questions